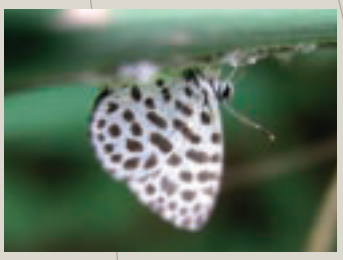

2005 Top News on the Environment in Asia

アジアの環境重大ニュース

IGES
Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
財団法人　地球環境戦略研究機関

Contents of the 2004 Top News on the Environment in Asia

Contents

〈Reports are placed in alphabetical order〉

目　次

〈国名　アルファベット順〉

2005 Top News on the Environment in Asia — Summary

1. Introduction

At the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, we have been announcing the top news on the environment in the Asia-Pacific region every year since 1998. This has been with the aim of collecting and organising information about environmental issues and policy trends in the region, and to report on how the region addresses environmental problems and how it works to create a sustainable society.

For this year's top news on the environment in Asia, we have collected a total of 118 news items from 3 organisations and 21 countries. These news items have been chosen by our supporting organisations or researchers, and do not necessarily represent the official views of the countries and organisations concerned.

The information we have received is wide-ranging and, in terms of content, it covers global warming, air quality, water resources, waste and recycling, harmful chemical substances, the conservation of nature, and policy measures and systems.

2. Global Warming

The eleventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP11) and the first-ever Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP/MOP1) were held in Montreal, Canada from 28 November to 9 December. At COP11 and COP/MOP1, the Marrakech Accords were adopted in connection with the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and the procedures and measures related to its compliance. With the establishment of committees and the selection of committee members, the Kyoto Protocol has finally entered its full-scale implementation stage.

Moreover, expectations regarding the Kyoto mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region were heightened. Efforts to implement the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) are growing particularly intense. Systems for the examination of CDM projects are increasingly being created in many Asian countries. For example, in China the laws concerning the operation and management of CDM projects have been revised; in Indonesia a Designated National Authority (DNA) has been established by the order of the minister of the environment; and in the Philippines an administrative order has been signed in connection with the domestic CDM recognition process.

The Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, which is intended to supplement the Kyoto Protocol, came into effect in July and marks the start of international efforts to deal with environmental problems through the development of clean and effective technology.

Furthermore, an international workshop on community level adaptation to climate change was held at Dhaka in Bangladesh in January and underlined the fact that adaptation to climate change is an urgent concern in the Asia-Pacific region. Discussions took place regarding the importance of setting adaptation issues at the core of development planning and also covered details of the measures that need to be taken in regions that are particularly vulnerable to climate change.

3. Air Quality

Large-scale economic development and urbanisation are proceeding apace in the Asia-Pacific region and it is vital that an appropriate response is made to the increasing severity of the resulting problems, such as air pollution and rapid motorisation.

In Nepal, because exhaust gases from old vehicles are one of the main causes of air pollution in the Kathmandu valley, tests of exhaust emissions from vehicles more than twenty years old have been made more stringent and more frequent. Vehicles that fail to pass these tests will be immediately removed from the roads. Furthermore, even vehicles that pass the test will only be allowed to remain in the valley for two more years.

In the Punjab, the largest province in Pakistan, efforts are being made to encourage environmentally friendly vehicles with a view to reducing air pollution in cities. In particular, attempts are being made to prohibit the manufacture and registration of the new two-stroke engine rickshaws and to promote CNG buses as an alternative.

Over the last thirty years, Singapore has been introducing innovative measures on road traffic. A tax has been imposed on cars entering the central business district between certain peak hours through the Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) system and moreover, the "peak hours" time period was extended in October.

In Malaysia, a bio-fuel policy has been drafted with the aim of making the country a major user of bio-diesel by 2007. The policy also incorporates the switching from the diesel fuel used at present, to bio-fuels based on palm oil by 2008.

4. Water Environment

Water pollution as a result of economic development continues to be a serious problem. It is having an enormous influence on people's everyday lives as well as on ecosystems.

In China, there was an explosion at a petro-chemical plant in Jilin on 13 November 2005 and as a result benzene and nitrobenzene escaped into the Songhua River, which flows through northeastern China. In Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang Province, an unprecedented situation occurred when the public water supply was turned off for four days. This accident also caused considerable anxiety in Russia, as the Songhua River forms a border between it and China.

In the River Narayani, one of the largest rivers in Nepal, pollution caused by harmful chemical substances from the factories located on its banks is becoming increasingly severe and is now threatening aquatic life. Fish and alligators have already been harmed and the results of tests carried out on water quality show that there is a danger of aquatic life becoming extinct in the river.

Conversely, there are reports from countries that are making positive efforts to deal with the protection of water resources and the management of water quality. In Malaysia, a proposal has been approved for the management of river basins, and all states are now required to make known their catchment areas. In New Zealand, discussions amongst the government, experts in the field, and the general public aimed at establishing a new national environmental standard for human drinking water in 2006 are currently underway. In Australia, the government has set aside funds of AUD 2 billion to be directed towards the improvement of water management and its related infrastructure.

5. Waste and Recycling

With regard to problems involving waste materials and recycling, methods are being explored that will enable economic activity to move forward in harmony with environmental conservation.

After having been proposed at the G8 summit last year, a ministerial conference on the 3R Initiative ("Reduction," "Reuse" and "Recycling" of waste materials) was held in Tokyo in April, marking its official start.

At the UNEP Sub-regional Environmental Policy Dialogue held in Bhutan, the question of e-waste (disposing of unwanted electronic

products) was discussed as an important environmental problem affecting the Asia-Pacific region. As the amount of e-waste is increasing year by year, together with urban populations and mass consumption, the need for cooperation within the region was actively discussed.

In China, a revised form of the "Law on the Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Wastes" was put into force in April 2005. Revisions had been made in connection with operation permits for hazardous waste and the control of rural solid waste pollution. A system of extended producer responsibility (EPR) was also instituted.

6. Harmful Chemical Substances

Progress regarding the problem of the destruction of the ozone layer is being made through international frameworks. According to a report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the consumption of CFC gases throughout the Asia-Pacific region has been halved. This year has seen Afghanistan and Bhutan ratify the Montreal Protocol and we can expect to see an increase in Asia's efforts to achieve the total abolition of materials that contribute to the destruction of the ozone layer. In March, as a signatory to the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, Cambodia passed a sub-law on the Management of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), which aimed to prohibit the use of such materials.

In the Republic of Korea (ROK), a standard for the volatile organic compound (VOC) content of paint has been established, making a significant contribution to the reduction of VOC emissions.

7. Nature Conservation

Many reports have been presented this year on the rich natural environment.

Bhutan is home to more than 650 species of birds, among which there are several in danger of extinction. The great efforts being made by Bhutan, which has hitherto striven to preserve its natural resources and to use them in a sustainable manner, has resulted in the nation receiving the first "Champions of the Earth Award" from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

In July, Japan's Shiretoko region was registered as a World Heritage Site because of its importance as a habitat of many rare seabirds and migratory birds.

In the Philippines, an international survey involving seventy scientists from seventeen countries announced the discovery of hundreds of hitherto unknown species of crab, shrimp and micro-shell organisms in the deep waters of Panglao Island. As a result, the rich diversity of marine life in the Philippines received international interest.

Energetic efforts are also being made to preserve bio-diversity.

In Vietnam, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a project is being implemented in two protected zones with a view to maintaining bio-diversity and ensuring the sustainable use of wetland resources.

In Bangladesh, there is a plan to set up sanctuaries for the conservation of genetically pure carp.

The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) in Kazakhstan launched a pilot project on ecosystem management in the Ili-Balkhash Basin and studies focussing on the sustainable development of the basin (which contains the largest lake ecosystem in the world,) are now underway.

8. Policy Measures and Systems

a) Initiatives by Countries

Reports are included about how governments in countries throughout Asia are positively tackling environmental issues through such

means as the updating of their legal systems.

In Laos, decrees have been approved concerning compensation for the negative consequences of development projects and also regarding the environment protection fund which aims to provide financial assistance for projects linked to regional environmentally-focussed development.

In Mongolia and Vietnam, a revised Environmental Protection Law has been adopted.

In New Zealand, where the tax laws have been revised, tax deductions are now recognised for companies that direct funds to the environment.

A number of unique attempts have been made under the leadership of Asian governments.

The Ministry of Environment in the ROK was engaged in a campaign aimed at collecting old mobile phones which were going unused in the home, primarily from elementary and middle school students. This has resulted in increased awareness that mobile phones contain harmful materials and of the importance of recycling such products.

In Japan, the Ministry of the Environment has been promoting the so-called "COOL BIZ" policy, whereby office workers are encouraged to go to work during the summer without their customary jackets and ties, thus reducing the amount of energy consumed by air conditioners.

b) Regional and International Cooperation

Efforts are being made across international borders to deal with environmental problems.

At the Second Meeting of the Aarhus Convention Parties (a convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters) held in Almaty, Kazakhstan in May, Central Asian NGOs reported on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Central Asian countries and made proposals about how to encourage further NGO participation.

The thirteenth SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) summit was held in the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka in November 2005. There, 2007 was designated the "Year of Green South Asia," and those who attended the summit showed their support for an afforestation campaign throughout the region.

As part of the Cartagena bio-safety Protocol, Cambodia, which was one of the signatories to this protocol, has formulated a draft law on bio-safety with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

In September, China, which is one of the leading importers and exporters of genetically modified organisms, also signed up to this protocol.

With the theme of "Nature's Wisdom," the 2005 World Exposition (EXPO) was held in Nagoya between March and September. The emphasis of the EXPO was on the close relationship between nature and humankind during the 21st century. It was attended by 22 million people.

9. Miscellaneous

The Sumatra-Andaman earthquake and the subsequent Indian Ocean tsunami at the end of last year had an incalculable impact on the Asia-Pacific region. Efforts at reconstruction are under way, but large numbers of people still have to lead their daily lives under very difficult conditions. In Sri Lanka, ground water was severely polluted, with around 62,000 wells affected. There are also reports that health-related problems have occurred in areas without a proper water supply. Reports from Malaysia indicate that a "message transmission system" to warn of earthquakes and tsunamis has entered the testing stage and at the same time, the construction of a debris and mudflow satellite warning system is being planned in order to minimise the loss of human life and damage to property caused by such events. In

India too, a tsunami early warning system with the ability to quickly disseminate information is now being constructed and implementation is planned for September 2007.

An enormous earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6 struck northern Pakistan in October, causing great damage.

Reports on Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) were particularly evident this year. In China, with the aim of protecting the environment, the State of Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) stopped thirty of the biggest power station construction projects in thirteen provinces and in cities close to the Three Gorges area. Indeed, this year has seen many environmental impact assessments which have incited much change. In Bhutan, pressure on the environment is growing on account of the growth in population and an increase in development activities. The nation is therefore working on institutionalising the process of the Environment Assessment Act and has updated its environmental assessment guidelines. In Central Asia, within the framework of the UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a trans-boundary context (the ESPOO (EIA) Convention), draft guidelines for formulating assessment procedures that extend past the national boundaries of neighbouring countries in Central Asia have also been produced.

In Japan, the problem of asbestos became particularly evident and the government embarked on studies aimed at implementing rigorous measures to solve this problem. Large numbers of buildings were erected in Japan using asbestos until the mid-1970s and there is concern that the damage caused by this problem may well increase in the future.

The Asia-Pacific Region

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. Effectuation of the Kyoto Protocol: Moving towards the Future Framework for Climate Change

The Kyoto Protocol adopted in 1997 finally came into effect on 16 February 2005. The eleventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP11) held in Montreal in December 2005 was the first meeting since Kyoto Protocol came into effect, and which was held in parallel with the first- ever Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP/MOP1). At COP11 and COP/MOP1, the Marrakech Accords were adopted in connection with the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and the procedures and measures related to its compliance. With the establishment of committees (e.g., the Compliance Committee under Kyoto Protocol and the Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee), and the selection of committee members, the Kyoto Protocol has finally entered its full-scale implementation stage. Regarding the future climate change framework that will follow the Kyoto Protocol, it was agreed that dialogue on cooperative action to address climate change by participation of all countries, including the United States and developing countries, would begin under the Convention. The commencement of the studies on the further actions of advanced countries regarding the Kyoto Protocol and its related procedures was agreed. Preparatory procedures for the review of the Kyoto Protocol were also decided.

2. CDM in Asian Countries

After the Kyoto Protocol came into force on 16 February 2005, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) market in Asia became more active than it had been the previous year and national approval systems in CDM host countries are now falling into place one by one. As of December 2005, more than a hundred projects had been approved by the DNA (Designated National Authority) in India. Of the eight projects registered by the CDM Executive Board, the biomass project in Rajasthan, India has already issued 48,230 tons of credit. In China, laws concerning the operation and management of Clean Development Mechanism projects have been revised. As a result, low priority CDM projects have been clarified. In addition, the law stipulates that the Chinese government will deduct revenues from the transfer of Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) in such projects as the HFC, PFC, N2O and some specific forestry projects. In Indonesia, the DNA was established by the order of the minister of the environment, and registration with the UNFCCC was completed on 5 October 2005. In the Philippines, an administrative order

concerning the domestic CDM approval process under the DNA was signed by the director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Thanks to the significant progress made regarding the system of operation and the laws related to the CDM in Asia, the region's CDM market will become more attractive and vigorous.

3. Japanese Government Responds to Illegal Logging

Illegal logging is broadly recognised as one of the most serious threats to natural forests in the Asia-Pacific region. In a presentation delivered in Tokyo in November 2005, the Indonesian NGO Telapak suggested that 80 per cent of logging in Indonesia is illegal. Recognising that as a major importer of tropical timber it has a responsibility to contribute to the sound management of forests in timber-exporting countries, the Japanese government is planning to amend the Green Purchasing Law, possibly as early as 2006. The amendments will require that government agencies promote timber and wood products from legal sources and well-managed forests in public procurement. Japan is also contributing to discussions on illegal logging through its support of the Asia Forest Partnership (AFP). The AFP, a voluntary, regional association of civil society, government and industry organisations, held its fifth annual meeting (AFP5) in Yokohama from 13-15 November. Illegal logging was the main topic of discussion at AFP5, which was hosted by the Government of Japan, and is being addressed by the partners through collaborative work plans on issues such as forest certification and improving co-operation between customs agencies. The work plans provide an opportunity for Japan to play a leadership role in combatting illegal logging.

Small trees which have been left by logging companies become the target for illegal logging. This photograph shows white lauan (*Pentacme contorta*) in the Philippine province of Isabela.

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4. Holding of the First Meeting of the Regional EST Forum in Asia

Enormous advances in economic development and urbanisation are currently occurring throughout Asia. This process is being accompanied by increasing motorisation, which is having the effect not only of causing localised problems of atmospheric pollution, but is also contributing to the aggravation of global environmental problems such as an increase in greenhouse gases. Thus, a rapid response needs to be made to environmental problems in the transportation sector in the developing countries of Asia. It is with this background that the first meeting of the Regional EST Forum in Asia was held in Nagoya in August 2005. This forum provided the setting for a lively debate on the realisation of transportation policy oriented towards environmental conservation among policy-makers from many Asian countries. The forum ended in the formulation of a strategy plan aimed at specific countries and the adoption of the "Aichi Declaration" as an expression of the collective will of all the participants in the forum. The declaration alluded to the establishment of the Regional EST Forum, the formation of networks and partnerships among on-going regional and international initiatives related to the environment and to transport in Asia, improvements in public health, the planning of environment & people-

friendly land use and urban transport infrastructures, public transportation planning and TDM, the promotion of non-motorised transport, awareness of social equity and gender perspectives, road safety and maintenance, the strengthening of roadside air quality monitoring and assessment, the introduction of cleaner fuel, strengthening public participation and the establishment of vehicle emission control standards as well as their inspection and maintenance (I&M).

Details: http://www.uncrd.or.jp/env/est/regional_est_forum/ first_regional_est_forum_top.htm
http://www.env.go.jp/press/press.php3?serial=6242

5. Groundwater Contamination in Sri Lanka Caused by the 2004 Tsunami

On 26 December 2004, the Sumatra-Andaman earthquake in Indonesia triggered tsunami that had devastating impacts on the Asia-Pacific region. Along with other environmental consequences, coastal shallow groundwater was seriously affected by the disaster. Indeed, groundwater contamination by saltwater intrusion, sewage and other pollutants due to the tsunami was observed in many parts of the tsunami-hit countries.

Sri Lanka was among the countries affected by contamination. The results of groundwater quality tests conducted after the tsunami show a high level of contamination, including water salinisation and coliform in many wells, indicating that the contaminated wells were not an appropriate source of drinking water. About 62,000 wells in the country are estimated to have been polluted by saltwater intrusion and sewage. Some tsunami-hit places lacked proper water supply systems and therefore had to rely on groundwater for domestic purposes after the tsunami, despite the contamination. Health-related problems resulting from the use of contaminated groundwater have been reported in some parts, especially in the eastern provinces where water supply systems are not sufficiently developed.

Although restorations of the contaminated wells are underway, it will take more time for a full recovery. Continuing efforts are required to resolve the groundwater contamination problems thoroughly.

6. Discussion about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on the Rise Internationally

Amidst the ongoing debate on how best to achieve good environmental and social practices in the global business supply chain, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum hosted an international meeting in Santiago, Chile between 25-28 September 2005. The workshop, entitled, "Voluntary Initiatives in Sustainable Production, Trade and Consumption Chains," was attended by more than seventy experts representing various ministries, including senior ministers from Chile and Peru, the business sector and such intergovernmental organisations as the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (CEPAL) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). The objective of the assembly was to identify the key barriers to the improved implementation of voluntary initiatives at the supplier level and as to prioritise viable options for addressing these barriers. The representatives observed that there is a great proliferation of voluntary initiatives that come as a part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Asia-Pacific economies and adherence has increased significantly over the last decade. However, these initiatives often lack monitoring, quantification of impact and clear overall environmental targets, and hence, concerted efforts are needed by different stakeholders to strengthen the activities further. The APEC

The Chilean Minister for Energy & Environment inaugurates the meeting (Santiago, Chile, 26 September 2005)

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meeting also acknowledged that the success of voluntary initiatives requires public policy action, including the setting of social targets, providing financial incentives and public recognition. The high level meeting made recommendations to the APEC ministerial sub-committee to establish a cross-sectoral coordination framework on sustainable development and corporate social responsibility.

As seen in the above case, the discussion about CSR is on the rise internationally and various moves were observed this year such as the standardisation of CSR in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

7. The Ministerial Conference on the 3R Initiative

In June 2004, at the G8 Summit at Sea Island, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi proposed the "3R Initiative," the aim of which is to create a recycling-oriented society based on the 3Rs of reduction, reuse and recycling of waste materials. Following this, a ministerial conference on the 3R Initiative was held in Tokyo between 28-30 April 2005, to formally launch the initiative previously proposed by the Japanese prime minister. This conference included the discussion of many of the main topics and issues involved in promoting the 3Rs, such as: the formulation of visions and strategies; the reduction of barriers to the international flow of goods and materials; the co-operation between developed and developing countries; the co-operation among stakeholders; and, the promotion of science and technology suitable for the 3Rs. Between 6-8 March 2006, a follow-up senior officials' meeting in Tokyo is planned in order to discuss how the initiative can best be implemented.

For details, please refer to:
http://www.env.go.jp/ earth/3r/en/index.html

The Asia-Pacific Region

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1. Biodiversity Conservation Corridor Initiative Endorsed at Greater Mekong Subregion Summit

The Biodiversity Corridor Initiative (BCI), which aims to conserve biodiversity and protected areas in the economic corridors of the greater Mekong subregion (GMS), was endorsed at the GMS Summit held in Kunming, China in July 2005.

The BCI will be carried out in two phases. From 2006-2008, an action plan for activities that cover poverty reduction, land use, restoration, capacity building and environmental financing will be developed and two BCIs will be piloted. Activities identified in the first phase will be carried out in the second phase (2008-2015).

During the summit, six leaders of GMS countries — Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam — committed to protecting the GMS environment and using natural resources wisely. While they stressed the importance of tourism for job creation and its benefits to local communities, they also welcomed recommendations to support a more holistic and co-ordinated approach to tourism development, including the implementation of high-priority projects, and the promotion of pro-poor and environment-friendly tourism. They also urged marketing the GMS as a single tourist destination and encouraged further work to develop a GMS visa.

UNEP has been working with the Asian Development Bank on the two main elements of the Core Environment Programme under the BCI. UNEP was an active partner during the design phase of the BCI and is now acting as the secretariat of the GMS Environmental Performance Assessment Project. During 2006-2008 and 2006-2015, UNEP will continue to play an important role in biodiversity data management and in the monitoring of the two phases of the BCI.

More information is available at:
www.adb.org/projects/gms-biodiversity

2. Asia and the Pacific Halves CFC Consumption and Moves towards Complete Phase-out

The Asia-Pacific region has begun to turn the tide on chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) consumption, reducing use by over 50%. CFC consumption was reduced from 103,321.93 ODP tons[1] to 46,352.35 ODP tons, in spite of the region's dependence on ozone depleting substances (ODS) for economic development. CFC is one of several man-made chemicals responsible for destroying the ozone layer.

While progress has been made, much needs to be done for further reductions, especially of halon and methyl-bromide. In April, twenty-three Asia-Pacific countries met to co-ordinate

1 Ozone depleting potential, metric tons.

their efforts, with the aim of fulfilling their commitments under the Montreal Protocol. Such commitments include: reducing CTC (carbon tetrachloride) consumption by 85 per cent; methyl chloroform by 30 per cent by the end of this year; and, CFC consumption by 85 per cent before 2007.

Afghanistan and Bhutan also ratified the Montreal Protocol this year and are well on their way to phasing out ODS use.

The meeting was organised with the support of the UNEP Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP). The CAP team provides UNEP assistance to the region to ensure compliance with the Montreal Protocol.

More at www.uneptie.org/ozonaction

3. Prevention Approach to Urban Environment Issues

Rapid urbanisation in the Asia-Pacific region has placed significant burden on the urban environment, resulting in problems that include urban land expansion, deteriorating water quality, air pollution, increased traffic congestion, and increased solid waste disposal and sanitation problems. Urban infrastructure deficiencies are acute both in peri-urban and inner-city sites.

In 2004, UNEP launched an urban environment project that focuses on prevention. It is designed to promote sustainable transport and eco-friendly buildings in the Asia-Pacific region. The project will disseminate information about sustainable transport and eco-friendly buildings and demonstrate their suitability and technological feasibility. Disseminated information will help increase awareness about the sustainability of cleaner transport and eco-friendly buildings, leading to their wider acceptance and use.

In 2005, UNEP established an expert network on eco-housing and initiated demonstrations of good practices through national consultations, training programmes, and feasibility studies.

4. UNEP Launches Two New Asian Youth Environment Networks to Boost Youth Involvement in Environmental Issues

Two new youth environment networks, Tunza North-East Asia Youth Environment Network (Tunza NEAYEN) and Tunza Pacific Youth Environment Network (Tunza PYEN) were launched this year to engage and involve youth in environmental issues. The launch of the two networks brings the number of youth networks established by UNEP in the Asia-Pacific region to three. The Tunza South Asia Youth Environment Network (Tunza SAYEN) was established in 2002. Plans are underway to launch more youth networks in the other sub-regions, namely Central and South-east Asia.

Tunza NEAYEN aims to mobilise youth and youth organisations in North-east Asia to work towards environmental protection and sustainable development. Fifty young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four from China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea met in Seoul at the inaugural conference in August to discuss how youth can contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in their countries. Tunza PYEN, which aims to help young people from the Pacific region become environmental leaders, was launched in October at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

Eleven young people from different countries in South Asia were trained in disaster management and conducted fieldwork in tsunami-affected areas as part of Tunza SAYEN's first internship programme. Tunza SAYEN will also be developing a youth strategy for sustainable development in South Asia and a youth guide on greening local areas and neighbourhoods. Tunza-PYEN will be producing a youth version of the *State of the Environment* for the Pacific.

More on www.rrcap.unep.org/projects/youth/index.cfm

Central Asia

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1. Introduction of Ecosystem Management in the Balkhash-Alakol Basin

In 2002, upon the government's request, CAREC developed the concept of sustainable development of the Ili-Balkhash Basin (IBB SD). The IBB SD concept is aimed at stabilising the socio-economic and environmental situation in the region and will be implemented by 2010. In July 2005, with TACIS support, CAREC launched a pilot project, namely the "Development of the Ili-Balkhash Basin Integrated Management Plan." The project aims to develop an experimental model of ecosystem management and possibly reproduce the experience in other basins. The model is based upon environmental management, long-term interests of stakeholders and ensures improved conditions for sustainable development of the Kazakhstan part of the Ili-Balkhash Basin.

The basin, located in the south-east of Kazakhstan and north-west of China, from the viewpoint of hydrology and biodiversity, is a unique water region and the largest lake ecosystem on the planet. Proper basin management will not only protect the current biodiversity and specific structure of the lake, prevent further erosion and desertification of the region, but will also provide a foundation for the basin's sustainable development.

Source: www.carec.kz

2. Second Meeting of Aarhus Convention Parties in Kazakhstan (MOP-2)

From 25-27 May 2005, Almaty, Kazakhstan, hosted the second meeting of the Aarhus Convention Parties. CAREC acted as an official partner of the convention secretariat and the receiving party for the Republic of Kazakhstan to arrange MOP-2.

While preparing for the meeting, Central Asian NGOs presented their views and experience regarding the Aarhus Convention implementation in each Central Asian country. They discussed the objectives of the Central Asian Initiative for sustainable development and suggested steps to activate NGOs involvement in current processes. The parties produced a resolution of the conference of the civil community and CA NGO representatives on the implementation of initiatives in the field of access to information, participation of the public in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. The Second Meeting of the Parties is aimed at strengthening the principles of environmental democracy through the efficient implementation of the Convention. The Almaty conference parties were to evaluate the efficiency of the steps and identify the plans for further convention implementation. During three days of discussions, the conference parties made a number of decisions, such as amendments to the convention, enabling the expansion of the

2nd Meeting of Aarhus Convention Parties in Kazakhstan (MOP-2)
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community right to be involved in GMO-related decision-making and to adopt the guidelines to assist in the implementation of the Aarhus Convention principles at other international environmental forums.

Source: www.carec.kz

3. Workshop on Water Quality Standards in Central Asia and Caucasus Countries

Governments are now facing a challenge: transforming the environment quality state management system into an apparatus capable of protecting both the health of the people and the environment. The Central Asian and Caucasus countries are uniting common and trans-boundary ecosystems and at this stage it is important to preserve common approaches and normative requirements. CAREC, supported by a UNECE, GWP, UNDP, EC and EAP Task Force, delivered a regional workshop entitled, "Problems and perspectives of the regulatory base related development of water quality in Central Asia and Caucasus countries." (April 2005, Kazakhstan) The workshop's objective was to exchange experiences in the field of water quality standards and perspectives of development. The workshop is to continue with the support of Russian and Caucasus RECs and with the involvement of water management and environment ministries and experts from Central Asia, the Caucasus and Russia, who are reviewing the issues of water quality management systems in Central Asia and Caucasus countries. The activities allowed the identification of possible fields of cooperation which could improve systems of water quality and water ecosystems regulation. The attendees adopted a resolution and also the recommendation by working groups, that CAREC should maintain cooperation between other countries' water and environmental sectors to improve the water quality regulation systems. The government of Kazakhstan has already included these activities in its action plan and budget of 2005-2006.

Source: www.carec.kz

4. Implementation of the Central Asia Regional Project on the ESPOO Convention

The UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a trans-boundary context (EIA) is an efficient mechanism to prevent negative effects and community impact when planning and implementing programmes and projects. Central Asian representatives, under the financial support of Switzerland, developed the procedures of trans-boundary assessment in Central Asia according to the framework of the EIA Convention, comprising detailed suggestions on procedures in line with the Environmental Strategy Convention. Training and public hearings were delivered at the regional and national levels to develop the guidelines, involving national and international experts. Currently, the draft guideline has been developed and provided to the Central Asian representatives for expert evaluation. The guidelines are aimed at harmonising environmental normative-legal mechanisms with the convention provisions.

Source: www.carec.kz

5. Mountain Ecosystems Assessment in Central Asia

In June 2001, the international programme of "Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)" was launched. It pays special attention to the assessment of the condition of the "man — biosphere" system at the turn of millennium. Given the significant role of mountains in ensuring the Central Asian region's vital activity and the need to develop a special section in the MA review, CAREC, under the support of the MA Secretariat and in cooperation with the World Fish Centre, developed the programme of "Central Asia Mountain Ecosystems Assessment" (ACAME). The programme activities are aimed at assisting the Central Asian countries in fulfilling their commitments under a number of international conventions and programmes, such as the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (CEIA TC), the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and the International Lakes (Water Convention).

Source: www.carec.kz

Australia

Peter Woods
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1. Australia Forges Asia-Pacific Partnerships on Climate Change

In July 2005, Australia became a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (APP).

Asia-Pacific Partnership members include: China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United States of America and Australia. The APP, which will set a new path for effective and efficient global agreements in clean technology development and deployment, is scheduled to meet at the senior ministerial level for the first time in Australia in January 2006.

The Australian government has committed AUD1.8 billion to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through a range of domestic and international initiatives.

Australia is an active party in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a principal goal of which is to create effective global arrangements to address the threat of climate change.

Australia is working with China under the Australia-China Climate Change Co-operation Initiative. Ten projects are currently being implemented in such areas as climate science, climate change impacts and technology co-operation, and also in the fields of renewable energy and coal mine methane.

Industry partnerships are central to Australia's climate change response. This year marked the tenth anniversary of its highly successful Greenhouse Challenge Plus Programme. Over 700 enterprises representing virtually all industry sectors in rural and urban areas, joined the programme and are actively pursuing ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Further information:
http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/ index.html

2. Water Reform

Australians live on the driest inhabited continent in the world; rainfall is extremely variable and droughts are a common occurrence. Improving the management of its water resources is, therefore, one of the greatest conservation challenges the country faces.

The National Water Initiative is a blueprint which sets out the objectives, outcomes and actions of the ongoing process of national water reform.

To help achieve the goals of the National Water Initiative, the government has established the Australian Government Water Fund, a AUD2 billion programme which invests in water infrastructure, improved water management and better practices in the stewardship of Australia's scarce water resources. The fund supports practical on-ground water projects that will improve Australia's water efficiency and environmental outcomes.

There are three components to the Australian

Government Water Fund:

* The AUD1.6 billion Water Smart Australia Programme was established to accelerate the development and uptake of smart technologies and practices in water use.
* The AUD200 million Raising National Water Standards Programme is intended for the development of the tools necessary for good water management in Australia.
* The AUD200 million Community Water Grants Programme promotes a culture of wise water use through community engagement, awareness and conservation.

Further information:
www.nwc.gov.au/water_fund/ index.cfm

3. New Wave of Environment Research Funding

Research into Australia's most pressing environmental issues received a AUD100 million boost with the launch of the Commonwealth Environment Research Facilities (CERF) Programme.

The programme is designed to increase Australia's capacity to understand and respond to key environmental issues. Funding of AUD40 million will help to address environmental issues facing the Great Barrier Reef, tropical rainforests and the Torres Strait. Another AUD60 million will be designated for the following priority areas:

* The condition of Australia's environmental assets - Using tools such as remote sensing, rapid assessment and data collection to better classify the condition of Australia's environmental assets.
* The threats and risks to Australia's environment - Assessing and managing risks to the environment posed by water availability and quality, changing land use patterns, fire regimes and climate change.
* The pressures on Australia's coastal environment - Research focusing on urban and land use pressures in coastal environments as a result of the rapid expansion of urban development.
* Social and economic aspects of Australia's environment - Determining and understanding the social and economic dimensions of environmental management.

Further information: www.deh.gov.au/cerf

4. Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement

In May 2005, the Australian Prime Minister Hon. John Howard, MP and the Premier of Tasmania, Hon. Paul Lennon MHA, signed the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement.

The Australian and Tasmanian governments will invest over AUD250 million in this agreement, including a comprehensive package of forest reserves and investments to strengthen the Tasmanian forest industry to provide new job opportunities. The agreement includes a substantial increase in protection of old growth forests in reserves, a new programme of incentives to protect forests on private land, an end date for the clearing of native forests, and improved protection of all rare, vulnerable and endangered vegetation communities.

These reserves are a significant addition to the world-class reserve system that was secured through the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement in 1997.

As a result of the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement, Tasmania will have nearly

Styx Valley, Tasmania, Australia
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2.9 million hectares, or 42 per cent of the state's land area, in reserves, including 45 per cent of the state's native forest cover.

Further information:
http://www.daff.gov.au/content/output.cfm?ObjectID=498CD7FB-3F4B-491F-86F3B9ACDBF56974

5. National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools Launched

To coincide with the first year of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the Australian government has produced the first National Environmental Education Statement for Australian Schools - *Educating for a Sustainable Future.* The statement was developed jointly by Environment and Education Ministries and has been distributed to all Australian schools. It provides advice for curriculum developers, teachers, schools and communities on the best approach to educating students about the environment and the importance of sustainability.

Further information:
http://www.deh.gov.au/education/publications/sustainable-future.html

Bangladesh

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1. Dhaka Declaration: 2007 Proclaimed the "Year of Green South Asia"

The thirteenth SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) summit held in Dhaka on 13 and 14 November 2005 proclaimed 2007 the "Year of Green South Asia" devoted to a region-wide afforestation campaign. The Dhaka Declaration of the 13th SAARC meeting underlined the need for collaborative actions in the area of environment, including water conservation, to promote sustainable development. The heads of state or government considered the modalities for having a regional environmental treaty in relation to furthering environmental cooperation among the SAARC countries. The summit endorsed the decision of the special session of the SAARC environmental ministers to further enhance the capacity of the existing SAARC institutions, namely the SAARC Meteorological Research Centre and the SAARC Coastal Zone Management Centre, to carry out their mandated tasks. The meeting emphasised the need to establish a SAARC forestry centre in Bhutan to play a coordinating role in the field of forestry and to promote the exchange of information, expertise, training and formulation of regional projects. The meeting underscored the urgency to put in place a permanent regional response mechanism dedicated to disaster preparedness, emergency relief and rehabilitation to ensure immediate response. The concerned national authorities were directed to coordinate their activities in such areas of disaster management as early warning, exchange of information, training, sharing of experience and the implementation of effective strategies in emergency relief efforts.

Source: The Daily Star, 14 November 2005

2. Sanctuaries to be Setup in Order to Conserve Pure Carp Species

The government of Bangladesh is planning to establish sanctuaries to conserve carp species of pure genetic quality. This was announced by Fisheries and Livestock Minister Mr. Abdullah Al-Noman during a press conference at the signing of a contract between the World Fish Centre (WFC) and the Bangladesh Shrimp & Fish Foundation (BSFF) in Dhaka. The contract is the first step in realising a study on the fish resources of the Halda River in the Chittagong region. The study aims to identify the factors affecting genetic purity of fish stocks and causes of declining brood fish and spawn in the Halda River. The study will also recommend short term remedial measures to prevent the decline of brood stocks and to help develop a proposal for long term sustainable recovery of fisheries to a maximum level of genetic purity.

The collection of carp spawn has fallen recently and, if this trend continues, the country will suffer seriously from a lack of carp which will satisfy but 43 per cent of the country's

demand for fish. The Halda River is a major shelter for local carp of genetic quality as well as for freshwater shrimp. The minister said that dumping of chemical materials from Chandraghona Paper Mill, overuse of motorised vehicles, silt deposition and over fishing resulted in the decline of brood stock in the river.

In addition to setting up a sanctuary at Halda River, two more sanctuaries, one at Sundarbans and the other at Chalan Beel (wetland), are being planned by the government for implementation.

Source: The Daily Star, 7 October 2005

3. Long-term Plan for the Improvement of Dhaka City's Environment

A 20-year strategic visionary plan dubbed the "Dhaka Environment Programme" (DEP) has been devised for the coordinated improvement of the city's environment, focussing primarily on the water quality of its surrounding rivers. A technical committee comprised of government officials, local and foreign experts formulated the programme which includes strategies and approaches to establish a "Green Dhaka" - one of the most crowded cities in the world. The preparation of the programme, supported by the Department of Environment (DOE, Bangladesh) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has been streamlined with the National Water Management Plan which will carry out all the development and maintenance activities of different public agencies and utility bodies. The programme involves as many as forty-five long and short-term technical action plans at an estimated cost around US$ 8 billion over the next twenty years. A salient feature of the programme is that, in order to ensure its successful execution, a steering committee has been formed, with the principal secretary to the prime minister as chair and secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forest as vice-chair. All concerned agencies would be accountable through the steering committee for the implementation and performance of their projects. The plan also suggests an advisory council representing civil society, including renowned citizens, academics, journalists and other professional groups, so that the opinions of the city's people can be integrated in the environment development programme.

Source: The Independent, 6 February 2005

4. International Workshop on Community Level Adaptation to Climate Change

A three-day international workshop on the "Community Level Adaptation to Climate Change," jointly organised by the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED, UK), IUCN and the RING was held in Dhaka from 16 to 18 January 2005. It focussed on integrating climate change into development planning in order to protect communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change across the world. About one hundred scientists, adaptation specialists, academics, planners and environmental activists from Bangladesh and abroad participated in the workshop.

The inaugural session of the workshop was

Dr. A. Atiq Rahman, executive director - BCAS, is addressing the inaugural session, while barrister Moudud Ahmed, Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs is seated at the podium (3rd from left)

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addressed by Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed while the concluding session was addressed by Forest and Environment Minister Mr. Tariqul Islam. Dr. Saleemul Huq, climate change director of IIED, Dr. A. Atiq Rahman, executive director of BCAS and Youssef Nassef of the UNFCCC, spoke in the workshop. The environment minister said that the scientists should find out how the vulnerable communities worldwide can cope with the impacts of climate change. He also stressed collective efforts for reducing vulnerability to climate change and reminded the industrialist countries of their responsibilities to the poor developing countries, the worst victims of climate change.

Source: The New Nation, 17 January 2005 and New Age, 19 January 2005

Bhutan

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1. The King and the People of Bhutan Receive "Champions of the Earth Award"

The King, His Majesty Jigmi Singye Wangchuck, and the people of Bhutan, received the first-ever United Nations Environment Programme's "Champions of the Earth Award" at a ceremony in New York on 19 April 2005. The award, according to the judges, was in recognition of Bhutan's commitment to placing the environment at the centre of its development plan and giving high priority to its preservation and sustainable use. The judges praised Bhutan's "excellent environmental track record" with more than 72 percent of its land under forest cover and 26 percent of this cover designated as protected areas. The prize is meant to publicise and encourage the worldwide replication of the achievements of the Champions of the Earth. The award's main objectives are: to recognise the environmental achievements of individuals and organisations who have achieved significant visibility around the world or in their regions; and, to further encourage laureates to continue their work and enhance environmental awareness at the regional and global levels. The Champions of the Earth Award was created by the UNEP in 2004 to honour individuals or groups who have made significant and recognised contributions, regionally or beyond, to the protection and sustainable management of the Earth's environment and natural resources.

Source: Kuensel, 23 April 2005, Volume XX, Number 25

Figure 1: Bhutan's Ambassador to the UN, Daw Penjo, with the other winners of the Champion of the Earth Award.

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2. Bhutan an "Isolated Island" with a Large Number of Birds Species

"Bhutan's pristine and untouched environment which is home to more than 650 different species of birds made it a special destination in Asia for birdwatchers," said Professor Peter deKnijff from Netherlands who was in Bhutan on a two-week birding spree. Travelling through Punakha, Trongsa, Zhemgang and to Bumthang to catch glimpses of Bhutan's rare birds, Professor deKnijff, who has been bird-watching for more than 41 years, said that bird-watching in Bhutan was a rare and a fascinating experience. He described Bhutan as an "isolated island" with lots of forested areas filled with a large number of bird species. He said that to be able to spot 226 different species of birds in just

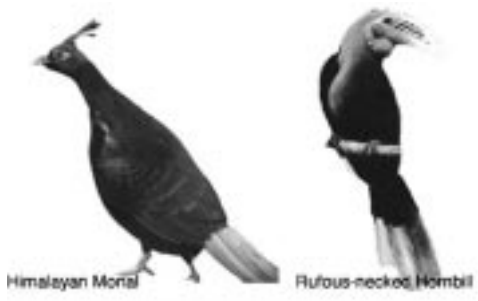

Figure 2: Himalayan Monan and Rufous-necked Hornbill found in Bhutan

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two weeks was overwhelming. "Even top professional birders can see about 320 birds in three weeks time," he said. Although it was only "roadside bird-watching," Professor deKnijff said that he was lucky to see rare species like the beautiful Nuthatch, Yellow-vented Warbler, the White-bellied Heron, the Himalayan Monal and the Rufous-necked Horn Bill, which are listed as rare and endangered. Of 9,000 birds recorded in the world, 650 are found in Bhutan. The number, according to Professor deKnijff, was large for a small country like Bhutan.

Source: Kuensel, 12 May 2005, Volume XX, Number 30

3. Ban on the Use of Plastic in Bhutan Reinforced

With mounting environmental concern over the indiscriminate use and discarding of plastic products throughout the country, the government of Bhutan has called for a reinforcement of the 1999 ban on plastic items like bags. Trade officials are confident that the ineffective ban could be rectified. The lack of proper alternatives to plastics, lack of cooperation from stakeholders, individual habits and the free flow of the banned items into the country, were some of the reasons for the failure of the ban. The Trade Ministry said that although paper bags were suggested as an alternative, the durability and the cost of the bags made it unattractive among the users. Trade officials told *Kuensel* that the paper factories in Bhutan would be encouraged to produce paper bags that are affordable and user-friendly. Having located the loopholes, the Trade Ministry and the National Environment Commission plan to make the second notification and revive the ban on June 5, coinciding with the World Environment Day. Traders not complying with the ban will be charged a "heavy penalty" if caught for the first time and their licenses revoked if caught again. The violators will not be given any consideration and the license will be cancelled immediately.

Source: Kuensel, 18 May 2005, Volume XX, Number 32

4. Pressure Increasing on Bhutan's Environment

The growing population and development activities are increasing the pressure on Bhutan's clean and intact environment, according to the National Environment Commission (NEC) while presenting the state of the environment report to the National Assembly. The process of the Environment Assessment (EA) Act, adopted in 2002, is well institutionalised and the NEC is working with the stakeholders to ensure that informed decisions are made to sustain the country's natural resource base. According to the report, about 142 environmental clearances have been issued, clearances for 180 projects are in the process and 32 are pending in the last year. The six EIA guidelines on forestry, industries, roads, hydropower, mining and power transmission lines were updated and two new EIA guidelines for urban and tourism sector were developed, according to the NEC. The NEC is also in the process of decentralising its function through the establishment of district environment committees which will speed up the environment clearance policy and also monitor the development activities in their respective districts.

Although Bhutan has 72 percent of its land under forest cover, it will be a major challenge for Bhutan to sustain the government's policy of

maintaining at least 60 percent of forest cover indefinitely.

Source: Kuensel, 22 June 2005, Volume XX, Number 42

5. E-waste: A Threat to the Environment

Disposing of unwanted electronic products, or e-waste, is becoming an emerging environmental problem in the region, according to the two-day Sub-regional Environmental Policy Dialogue (SEPD) meeting for the Asia-Pacific region in Thimphu. E-waste generation in the urban areas of Asia and the Pacific region are increasing annually due to the increasing population, consumerism, and changing lifestyles. This region is home to 60 percent of the world's population.

"A huge concentration of people is in the urban areas and the electronic waste from these areas has become a very relevant problem," said the Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Dr. Klaus Toepfer, adding that regional cooperation was necessary to solve the e-waste problem. The deputy minister for the environment said that e-waste could become an 'unmanageable problem' for a small country like Bhutan in the future. Awareness of the e-waste issue, resource mobilisation and the establishment of a regional network on e-waste as part of regional initiative, were some of the activities proposed to tackle the problem. The environmental policy dialogue for the sub-regions, which was jointly organised by the National Environment Commission and the UNEP was established in 2003 and was meeting for the third time.

Source: Kuensel, 1 October 2005, Volume XX, Number 71

6. Bhutan's Forest Cover 64.35 Percent, not 72.5 percent

Bhutan has only 64.35 percent of its land area under forest cover, not 72.5 percent, according to the annual forestry conference held in Thimphu. The 72.5 percent figure was derived in 1983. With about 100,000 trees felled every year and about 1,000 acres of forest land lost to development activities, mining, and forest fires, the actual tree-covered forest is declining. The Department of Forests explained that the 72.5 percent forest cover, as projected by the satellite image, had included river basins, shrubs and all the uninhabited land and, therefore, had not revealed the correct picture of actual forest cover. The prime minister and minister for agriculture, Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup, said that the country had lost about 2,737 acres of forest to development activities, about 975 acres to mining, stone and sand quarries and about 19 acres annually to forest fires. About 2.1 million cubic feet of timber annually, or about 100,000 trees, was used and 1.1 percent of the forest was considered degraded. He pointed out that, at this rate, maintaining a 60 percent forest cover as spelled out by the forestry policy and as mandated by the National Assembly, would be difficult.

Source: Kuensel, 8 October 2005, Volume XX, Number 73

Cambodia

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Royal Government of Cambodia

1. State of the Environment Report 2004

The State of the Environment Report 2004 was successfully produced by the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) and received strong support from the Royal Government of Cambodia. It has been officially in use from 18 April 2005.

The report is intended to provide the status of the environment in the Kingdom of Cambodia and establish a broader acceptance of the principle of sustainable development, natural resources management and environmental protection consistent with the political platform and the government's rectangular strategy in which good governance is the key to success.

The report covers seven areas: human settlement, land, water, biodiversity, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. In each area, a number of

The State of the Environment of Cambodia
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indicators have been selected to describe the status and the development of the use of natural resources and the impact on the environment taking into consideration four main questions: What is happening? Why is it happening? Are we seeing changes? And, how effective are the responses?

2. Sub-decree on the Management of Ozone Depleting Substances

The Sub-decree on the Management of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), which consists of nine chapters and thirty articles, was adopted by the Council Ministers on 17 March 2005.

The sub-decree was prepared by the Ministry of the Environment in response to the obligations under the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol as a signatory to them. Its objective is to stop the use of ozone depleting substances and manage all business activities and consumption identified by the Convention and the Protocol. Furthermore, this sub-decree applies to the import, export, transit, handling, production, and use of ozone depleting substances even though they exist alone or as part of a mixture, are pure or have already been used, or are recycled or refined in Cambodia.

3. Draft Law on the Establishment and Management of Protected Areas

In 1993, the Kingdom of Cambodia established twenty-three protected areas covering eighteen percent of the total land area: seven national parks, ten wildlife sanctuaries, three landscape protected areas, and three multiple use areas. The draft law on the Establishment and Management of Protected Areas, which consists of eleven chapters and sixty-six articles, was approved by the Council of Ministers on 26 August 2005, and will be submitted to the National Assembly for final approval.

The draft on protected areas was developed by the Ministry of Environment with the objectives of conserving biodiversity, assuring the sustainable use of natural resources in protected areas and contributing to the development of a national economy and poverty reduction consistent to the Rectangular Strategy of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

According to the draft law, Cambodia protected areas can be divided into four zones: (i) the core zone is a significant area for conserving endangered and threatened flora and fauna species and which has vulnerable ecosystem; (ii) the conservation zone is near the core zone and is beneficial in conserving natural resources, ecosystem, watershed, and aesthetic beauty; (iii) the sustainable use zone is a managed area significant for national socio-economic development; and, (iv) the community zone is an area managed for existing social and economic development activities of the local and indigenous people.

4. Draft Law on Biosafety

The draft law on biosafety, which consists of eleven chapters and forty-five articles, was approved by the Council of Ministers on 9 September 2005 and will be submitted to the National Assembly for final approval.

The draft was prepared by the Ministry of the Environment with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) via the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and according to the obligations stipulated in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety concerning the risks attached to living modified organisms (LMOs).

The draft aims to carry out the warning principle on biosafety: to hinder the negative impacts on biodiversity and natural resource conservation; assure the efficiency of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and, to take into account the risks to human health and the environment.

5. Senior Officials' Briefing on National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA)

Under the UNDP-GEF National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) Project, which aims to help Cambodia meet its obligations of the three UN Conventions on the environment that relate to biodiversity, climate change and land degradation by developing and strengthening national capacity for sustainable management and use of natural resources and environment for benefits of the people, the Cambodian Ministry of Environment organised a Senior Officials' Briefing on NCSA on 20 September 2005 at the Cambodiana Hotel, Phnom Penh. Sixty people who are senior officials and decision-makers from relevant government agencies, NGOs/IOs, UNDP, GEF and, in particular, an expert from the Philippines, participated.

The objectives of the meeting were to raise the awareness of the importance of the NCSA for the sake of national development and poverty reduction, make relevant ministries realise the priority capacity needs and actions to carry out under their responsibilities, and get positive support from senior officials for the NCSA document.

The Senior Officials' Briefing on National Capacity Self-Assessment

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China

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1. Build a Resource-Saving and Environmentally-Friendly Society: the Direction of Making the 11th Five-Year Plan

China is making the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-2010) for guiding the development of society and the economy. The orientations of the plan on environmental protection are as follows:

(1) Energetically develop a circular economy: Circular economy development is an important way to build a resource-saving and environmentally-friendly society and to realise sustainable development. The initiatives of reducing, reusing and recycling are fundamental principles that encourage the practice of saving energy, water, land and materials. They enhance the multi-purpose use of resources, improve the recycling system of renewable resources, promote cleaner production, and form a way of saving growth with low input, low consumption, low emission and high efficiency.

(2) Enhance the implementation of environmental protection: Insist on putting prevention first and enhancing pollution control and ecosystem conservation from the source, and on changing the general attitude to a philosophy of "prevention is better than cure". Each district and department should take environmental protection as an important task, take strict and effective measures to reduce the total affect of pollution emissions, and earnestly settle the acute problems whose impact is felt in social development, especially those that seriously endanger people's health and welfare.

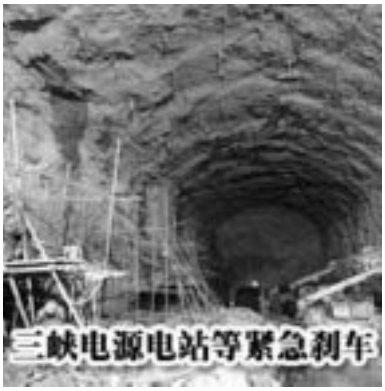
(3) Earnestly protect the natural ecosystem. Insist that protection should be high-priority and development should be ordered. Focus on the control of irrational exploitation of resources and enhance the ecological protection of natural resources, such as watersheds, land, forests, grasslands and oceans.

Source: www.xinhuanet.com

2. The Year of Environmental Impact Assessment in China

This year was called the year of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) in China. The State of Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) announced on 18 January 2005 that it was going to stop thirty of the biggest power station construction projects in thirteen provinces and cities around the Three Gorges area. It also announced that in May it would stop a project preventing water leakage from the pond in Yuanmingyuan Ruins Park. These actions are unprecedented in China, and have generated much discussion throughout the whole country.

The SEPA ordered the strengthening of environmental laws, the approval of construction



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projects only after their environmental impact has been strictly assessed, and a ban on construction projects which are of low quality and are disorganised. This is the first time that SEPA has stopped large-scale projects since the implementation of the EIA Law of China. The objectives of the EIA storm are as follows: (i) To promote the implementation of the strategic EIA for improving the systemic decision-making mechanisms between economic development and environmental protection; (ii) To promote circular economy development and adjust the industrial structure and change the economic development pattern; (iii) To carry out the enforcement by laws and punish the transgressors; (iv) To improve the public participation mechanisms and fully utilise the role of the public; (v) To regulate the organisations of EIA and construct a system of professional qualification and strengthen its responsibilities.

The SEPA issued the new circular called "Qualification Management of Construction Project EIA Organization" to promote the reform of EIA and enhance the management of EIA organisations. This activity shows the determination of SEPA and the Chinese government in seeking a balance between development and environmental protection which earned wide support and made great progress within the environmental protection process in China.

Source: The State Environmental Protection Administration

3. The Formal Implementation of the Newly Revised Law of the People's Republic of China on the Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Wastes

The People's Republic of China's law on the Prevention and Control of Environmental Pollution by Solid Wastes was issued in October, 1995. The law has relatively thorough provisions on the responsibility for controlling pollution in the production process, while almost neglecting the responsibility of recycling and the disposal of used products and packages. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) checked the law's implementation in 2003, and at the 12th session of the Standing Committee of the NPC in October, 2004, discussed the protocol of this revised law for the first time. The principles for revision are to encourage the recycling of solid wastes and to comprehensively ascertain the polluters' responsibilities. On 29 December 2004, the Standing Committee of the NPC passed the newly revised law which became effective on 1 April 2005.

The newly revised law establishes a system of extended producer responsibility that prescribes that "the central government will carry out the compelling recovery system for part of products and packing, the administrative department of

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the state council will establish the catalogue and methods," and clearly details the duties of the solid waste producer when separation, M&A, property transfer, withdrawal, dissolution and bankruptcy happen. The revised law also eradicates the burden of proof inversion on amendments for solid waste pollution damage, and revises such contents as the elimination of equipment producing industrial solid wastes, operation permits for hazardous waste and control of rural solid waste pollution.

The revision implements the idea of sustainable development and the essential concern for a circular economy; concentrates on the principles that polluters should take charge in accordance with the law; and, organisations and individuals should be encouraged to pay attention to the concept of recycling. At the same time it reorganises and inaugurates part of the old edition. The revision reflects the practical feature that China's environmental law is advancing with the times and provides a powerful legal tool for environmental pollution control in the new period.

Source: The State Environmental Protection Administration

4. China's Reply to the Kyoto Protocol and the Future Development of the CDM Projects

On 16 February 2005, the Kyoto Protocol officially took effect. The government of China has taken seven active countermeasures against the climate change problem: firstly, it established a state climate change harmonisation organisation; secondly, it energetically took part in the international negotiations on climate change; thirdly, it carried out a series of policy measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For example, it realised a well planned and realistic sustainable development strategy and put appropriate emphasis on climate change; it strived to increase energy efficiency and made efforts to improve the energy infrastructure; it promoted the utilisation of new and renewable energies; it supported the development and use of such new and renewable energies as biomass energy, solar energy, wind energy and terrestrial heat in rural and remote areas; it carried out large-scale tree planting projects; fourthly, it earnestly performed the concrete incumbencies described in the Protocol; fifthly, it carried out education activities on climate change; sixthly, it carried out scientific research on climate change; and, seventhly, it prepared for the Protocol actualisation.

To fully utilise the opportunities provided by the Clean Development Mechanism, the government of China established a CDM audit council consisting of correlative departments. Moreover, in June 2004, it issued "the China Temporary Management Measures for the Clean Develop Mechanism," and prescribed a project declaration and permit process. At present, China has formally approved two CMD projects and there are many projects under preparation. At the same time, the document "National Strategy Replying to Climate Change," which will guide China, was formulated.

The possible CDM projects for China include: (1) To increase energy efficiency among the emission reducing schemes that are currently actualised. It's most likely to increase the efficiency of energy terminal utilisation and coal combustion; (2) To develop alternative energy sources. It will be a more promising scheme to develop alternative energy on a large scale in the medium and long-term; (3) The connection between emission reduction potential and the Clean Development Mechanism projects.

Furthermore, China has potential international cooperation projects for the development of the Clean Development Mechanism in such fields as: industry enterprise pollution control and circular economy development, municipal household solid waste treatment and disposal, HFC-23 recycling and nature conservation.

As a large developing country, China can obtain obvious benefit in terms of economy, environment and society with the CDM, so it's reasonable to participate in and carry out the

CDM energetically. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare and decide countermeasures early.

Source: www.people.com.cn, www.xinhuanet.com, www.cdm.ccchina.gov.cn

5. China Becomes a Contracting Party to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

On 6 September 2005, China became a contracting party to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

On 29 January 2000, in Canada, at the assembly of contracting parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (the Convention), the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (the Protocol) was passed. The Protocol, a legally-binding international file under the Convention, was framed to solve the security problem of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). China subscribed to the Protocol on 8 August 2000, and the State Council approved it on 27 April 2005.

The Protocol consists of a foreword, forty clauses and three annexes, which include the main contents of the following: the target, applied scope, prior informed consent procedure, risk assessment and management, mark, state's competent department of and connection site, organism security information exchange mechanism, capacity building, indemnity liability and remedy, public participation, financial mechanism, and so on. The basis of the Protocol is the prevention principle. The target is to ensure the security of GMOs and their products, to reduce the underlying possible damage to biological diversity and people's health, and to carry out strict management measures of GMOs.

At present, China is a major importer and producer of GMOs. As a contracting party of the Cartagena Protocol, China will bear more responsibility for its implementation.

Source: The State Environmental Protection Administration

6. Petrochemical Company Blamed for Songhua River Pollution

The Songhua River in north-east China was severely polluted owing to an explosion at a petrochemical plant far up-stream, as declared by China's State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA). The blast took place at around 13 : 45 on 13 November 2005 in the workshop of a chemical plant belonging to Jilin Petrochemical Company of the China National Petroleum Corporation. The explosion caused a benzene and nitrobenzene spill into the Songhua River, forcing Harbin, the capital of China's Heilongjiang Province, to cut off its water supply to 3.8 million citizens for four days, something never before experienced by a large city.

The incident has stimulated wide-spread reflection about China's environmental water conditions. Six major problems include: (1) At present, surface water is the sole potable water source for many cities in China. However, due to burst pipes and the frequent pollution of surface water, the availability of potable water has been seriously restricted. (2) A water supply safety control system has not yet been established. Such a system should monitor the whole process of water-supply, from its treatment at the source to its delivery to consumers. (3) There is a complete lack of emergency measures or suitable response systems capable of dealing with unforeseen emergencies that affect the urban water supply. (4) The river basin management systems of China are still under-developed. Moreover, there is no one real integrated institution which is responsible for the management of water basin issues, such as water quality and quantity, and overall financing, etc. (5) A system of industrial pollution control is yet to be successfully implemented. (6) The toxic pollution of the Songhua River caused great concern in neighboring Russia, making this recent incident an international water issue.

These recent events have made the general

public more aware of the value of a sound environmental situation. This wide-scale realisation should be considered an important social event which covers many fields such as urban public work management, river basin management, urban water management and urban public safety and risk management.

India

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1. The Environmental Cost of the 2004 Tsunami

More than 250,000 people in Asia were killed in the tsunami of 26 December 2004. According to the government of India, overall damage has been assessed at approximately USD2.56 billion. The largest damage was to fisheries, housing and infrastructure. Worst affected was the eastern coast of southern India and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Coastal development in these regions that involved clearing of mangroves or destruction of coral reefs that provide natural defenses against the sea, intensified the destructive power of the tsunami. Degradation due to shrimp farming and irresponsible coastal development for industry and tourism are further reasons. In many of the affected areas ground water, bore holes and aquifers have been contaminated by salt water and bacteria due to seawater infiltration and damage to toilets, septic tanks and other sanitation systems. The rehabilitation of groundwater supplies, waste management (including the safe disposal of rubble, construction materials and hazardous waste) and the restoration of the livelihoods of those in the agricultural and fisheries sectors are challenging tasks that lie ahead.

The tsunami has once again made the country's environmental lobbies press for recognising the importance of coastal regulation zones (CRZ) and coastal zone planning for the prevention of such disasters. The government of India is establishing a tsunami early warning system. A round-the-clock monitoring system, costing 1.25 billion rupees (USD28.2 million) will be set up. It is likely to be operational by September 2007. The system's main advantage is its speedy dissemination of information (within five minutes), like systems in Japan and Chile. Countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) agreed to set up a disaster management centre in India to help the region better handle calamities like tsunamis, earthquakes and floods that have ravaged it in the past.

Ref: http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=424&ArticleID=4733&l=en
http://www.infochangeindia.org/features241.jsp
http://www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm?newsid=29080&newsdate=19-Jan-2005
http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2005/01/mil-050105-usia08.htm
http://news.indiainfo.com/2005/01/12/1201tsunamiwarning.html
http://www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm?newsid=33428&newsdate=11-Nov-2005

2. Incidence of Cancer and Its Link with Pesticides in the Punjab

Abnormally high traces of pesticides were reported in blood samples taken from the villagers in the Talwandi Sabo block of the

Bathinda district. The same villages were also recording abnormally high numbers of cancer patients. A study was initiated by the chief minister of the Punjab, Capt. Amarinder Singh, and was conducted by the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, while being sponsored by the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB).

Ref: http://www.indiatogether.org/direct/2005/cdr-000078.html

3. India is Losing Its Prized Tigers

For a variety of reasons, in various tiger reserves across India, the tiger count is suddenly on the decline. There are roughly twenty-seven tiger reserves under "Project Tiger" in India. These areas cover a total area of 37,761 km^2, which is 1.15% of the total geographical area of the country. In 1992, the estimated tiger population in these reserves was approximately 1,500 and the total population within the country was nearly 4,000. A century ago, there were about 40,000 tigers in the country. Now, government figures say about 3,700 survive while some experts say the number may be barely 2,000 because of heavy poaching.

Ranthambore is reporting up to 18 missing tigers this year. In Dudhwa in Uttar Pradesh, Indravati in Chhattisgarh, Corbett in Uttaranchal, and in so many other parks, the pug-marks are fading. The problems of poaching, shrinking habitats, recurrent droughts, depleting prey bases, and mal-administered inbreeding threaten to reverse the successes of Project Tiger. The Prime Minister set up a Tiger Task Force to suggest measures to project tigers.

However, the good news is that a notorious "wildlife trader" known to operate in Sariska, Kalya has been arrested in Rajasthan. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has been working on a cabinet note to set up a multi-disciplinary wildlife crime bureau.

Ref: http://www.indianexpress.com/full_story.php?content_id=78694
http://www.planetark.com/

4. India's Reinforced Commitment towards Climate Change

During the G8 Summit at Gleneagles, the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, and leaders of several developed countries reaffirmed their commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol to address global climate change.

Dr. Singh emphasised that the international regime represented by the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol relies on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Developed countries should, therefore, take the lead in international action to combat climate change by fully implementing their obligations of reducing emissions, providing additional financing and facilitating the transfer of cleaner, low-emission and cost-effective technologies to developing countries.

In line with the agenda of the convention, Dr. Singh advocated economic and social development and the eradication of poverty as the first and overriding priorities of developing countries. He appealed for the development and financing of policies, measures and mechanisms that will aid the adaptation required to deal with the inevitable adverse effects of climate change that are being borne mainly by the poor.

Ref: http://pmindia.nic.in/visits.htm
http://www.hcilondon.net/pm-visit/paradigm.html

5. Heavy Rains Hit Cities of India and Claim Hundreds of Lives

Heavy rain and storms paralysed life in the major cities of southern India this year. The death toll grew as roads flooded, power and phone lines snapped and flights were disrupted.

Chennai, the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu, Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra, and Bangalore the capital of Karnataka were hit by the latest downpour as many areas in these cities were inundated and life was made difficult for all.

Nearly 50,000 people from the flooded low-lying areas in Chennai and its suburbs were evacuated. Over 100,000 food packets were distributed to the temporary shelters which were set up in the community centres of Chennai.

Chennai city received 27 cm (11 inches) of rain.

The neighbouring states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh also struggled to cope with torrential rain this month. More than 100 people were killed in the three states, mostly in house collapses or due to electrocution.

At COP11, there was emphasis on studies relating to "cities and climate change." Some of these observations must be incorporated into climate policies and adaptation strategies.

Ref: http://www.planetark.com/searchresults.cfm?criteria=india&listfrom=41&sortorder=date&showweeks=-520

6. Indian Centre for Science and Environment Receives World Water Prize 2005

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the New Delhi-based non-governmental organisation headed by Sunita Narain, a dynamic advocate — nationally and internationally — for water and the environment, human rights, democracy and health, received the USD150,000 prize and a crystal sculpture from King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.

CSE's work on rainwater harvesting has shown many traditional and indigenous ways in which people learnt to live and manage with water scarcity. The solutions practiced diversely in different regions, lie in capturing rain in millions of storage systems — in tanks, ponds, step-wells and even rooftops — and to use it to recharge groundwater reserves for irrigation and drinking water needs.

Ref: http://www.cseindia.org/aboutus/press_releases/press-index.htm

7. India's Endangered Rhinos Making a Comeback, according to Kalyan Das, Chief Officer of the Jaldapara Sanctuary in West Bengal

The rhino population in two marshy riverine sanctuaries in the eastern West Bengal state has jumped to 121 from just 14 in 1985, a state wildlife official said.

Officials estimate the number of rhinos has risen to 1,700 in the neighbouring state of Assam, which is home to the country's largest rhino habitat, up from 1,550 according to a census done in 1999.

The ongoing awareness campaigns among villagers and their involvement in running patrols in rhino reserves have helped to steer them away from poachers, who use them as guides to hunt down the animals.

Ref: //www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/30768/newsDate/12-May-2005/story.htm

Indonesia

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1. The Early Start of Environmental Education

Following act 2 of 1989, it has been clearly stated that national development in the educational sector is an effort to intellectualise the nation, to improve Indonesians' quality of life and to create welfare for the entire nation in an equal and sustainable way. As part of national sustainable development, an education vision should be based on efficient and effective natural resource management and exploitation.

Since life depends on how best natural resources are scientifically and technologically approached, the living environment concept must be taught from the very start of education.

At primary and high school levels, knowing, understanding and committing to the living environment must be integrated into all curricula, namely as part of biology, chemistry, physics, languages and cultural learning.

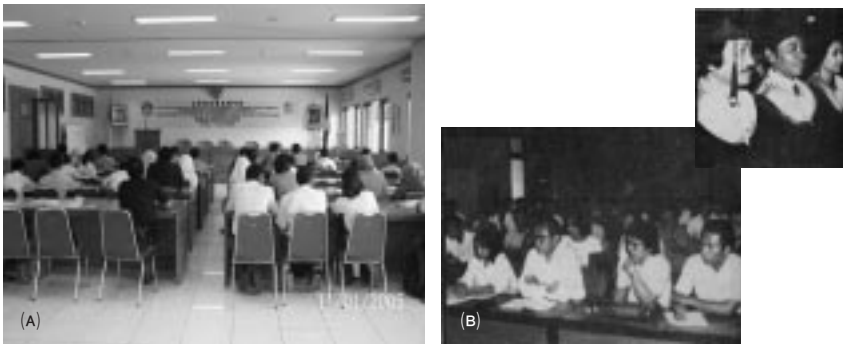
Several training programmes for primary and high school teachers in West Java, Jakarta and Banten provinces have been conducted in which 2,500 teachers participated. The training programme consisted of examples of integration and development as well as how to minimise wasted resources, reduce, repair, refill, recharge, rehabilitate, remediate and recycle resources.

The integrated training programme for teachers of primary, high and vocational schools in 2005 (Soerjani 2005).

2. Early Environment Study at the Tertiary Level

The postgraduate programme in environmental science in Indonesia was initiated by the University of Indonesia in 1982 and offers a master's degree in environmental science. The reason for this initiative was that when the minister of state for development supervision and the environment, Professor Emil Salim was appointed in 1978, there was no one on his immediate staff educated in environmental science. They were mostly professionals in agricultural science, law, economics, technological engineering and the medical sciences. Therefore, the postgraduate programme was a crash course designed to enable the future generation at the minister's office to deal with environmental matters and development, as well as to acquire knowledge and commitment to the environment and to environmental science.

The directorate-general of primary and high schools developed the living environment concept and it was integrated into all levels of



A separate programme for the lower and high school levels (A) and the tertiary postgraduate (MSc and PhD) levels (B) both in environmental education (Soerjani 2005 and 1989).

the curricula of primary, high and vocational schools in early 1996. This left a gap in environmental education, namely between the pre-university and postgraduate levels.

Therefore a programme at the graduate level (Sarjana Ilmu Lingkungan) or a BSc in environmental science is now being prepared to be officially offered at the tertiary level; further information can be obtained from M. Soerjani (soerieed@centrin.net.id).

3. Management and Development of Environmental Education

Approaching the 2005 Environmental Day (3 June 2005,) the two ministers, Rachmat Witoelar, the minister of the living environment and Professor Bambang Soedibyo, the minister of national education, signed an MOU related to the management and development of environmental education.

Two ministers, the minister of the living environment and the minister of national education signing the MOU on environmental education on 3 June 2005, in Jakarta (Soerjani 2005).

This MOU is based on the following:

- That sustainable national development is urgently needed in order to have human resource competence in the sustainable maintenance of the living environment.
- The knowledge and commitment to the living environment should be acquired as early as possible by all levels of the community, namely all educational institutions and groups.

The cooperation between the two ministers aimed to improve:

- Coordination in the environmental education programme in the short, medium and long term.
- Environmental education as the main system to change the human attitude towards and to promote awareness of the environmental culture.
- Environmental education through all institutions, for all sectors and at all levels.
- The quality and quantity of human resources in environmental education programmes.
- The community's participation as stakeholders in environmental education.

4. Efforts for the Implementation of the Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol is related to greenhouse gas effects and the exploitation of forests

The tropical forests of Indonesia could obtain millions of US dollars without logging. The tropical forests must also be maintained as a buffer zone from the man-made environment, such as the city forest (hutan kota) in South Jakarta (Soerjani 2005).

through logging.

These two controversial matters are coming together in the Kyoto Protocol to be coordinated in such a way that should be complementary to each other. The greenhouse gas effect to some extent is the impact of industrial development which needs to fulfil the increasing human need for food, shelter, clothing, transportation system and other consumable items. This can be overcome or balanced by forest systems, but a prerequisite is that the forests are not sold through logging.

Industrial development can continue through carbon trade. The tropical forest is rich in its biodiversity and could maintain 200-250 tons CO_2/ha. It has been calculated that the price of CO_2 is US$5/ton. In West Java alone, the Ujung Kulon conservation forest covers 50,000 ha. That could be sold as part the clean development mechanism (CDM) to obtain between US$50 and 62.5 million. This could be obtained in the first commitment period (2008-2012).

5. The Ciliwung River Campaign

In 1989 the Environmental Study Centre initiated a clean river campaign in Jakarta starting with the main river flowing across Jakarta City, the Ciliwung.

The campaign started with a river rowing campaign and a drawing competition among the school children.

Up to now, the Clean Ciliwung building has been maintained and utilised for community activities, along with the community sustainable environmental campaign programme.

The campaign consisting of a river campaign (A), the drawing competition between school children (B) and the campaign that resulted in the aid provided by the former Japanese Ambassador, H.E. Kimio Fujita, to build the Clean Ciliwung building (C) in Jakarta (Soerjani 1990).

Japan

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1. Asbestos Problem

This June, Kubota Corporation, the biggest producer of agricultural machinery, announced that many of their workers who handled asbestos in the factory died of asbestos-related illnesses, such as mesothelioma and lung cancer. More shockingly, not only the health of workers in the plant, but also that of the people living around the plant was being adversely affected by asbestos. This has suddenly led to an increase in concern about asbestos-related problems and the media has given prominent coverage to the problem. Subsequently, other companies that dealt with asbestos and its products released information about workers who died from asbestos-related illnesses and other damage caused by asbestos. The government of Japan estimated that victims of asbestos-caused illnesses since 1970 who were not covered by workers' accident insurance would be more than 9,000. The government belatedly started to make a serious effort against the problems, and ratified the ILO Asbestos Convention. In addition, the government has just begun preparing a bill to submit to next year's regular session of the Diet that will introduce the reimbursing of medical expenses for such patients suffering from diseases caused by asbestos. Until the mid-1970s, there were no governmental regulations covering the use of asbestos in Japan, so it was used in the construction of most buildings. The time has now come for such buildings to be torn down. It is worrying to consider the expanding and worsening effects of asbestos in the near future.

2. COOL BIZ

There was a "COOL BIZ" boom this summer. As a national campaign against global warming, the government of Japan started a practice of "no ties and no jackets" in order to keep the temperature setting of air conditioners over 28 degrees Celcuis in the office during the summer season. The practice was named "COOL BIZ", which was chosen by the public. Key persons in both politics and the business world of Japan, including Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, have taken initiatives in implementing the "COOL BIZ" practice. The "COOL BIZ" boom also made a considerable positive impact on the Japanese economy because many business

COOL BIZ

people bought new shirts and clothes to match the "COOL BIZ" practice. As for the coming winter season, the government of Japan is proposing a so-called "WARM BIZ" practice.

Source: http://www.team-6.jp/action/coolbiz/index.html (Team-6% homepage)

3. EXPO 2005 AICHI JAPAN

The 2005 World Exposition (EXPO), in the Japanese Prefecture of Aichi, was held at Nagoya Eastern Hills from 25 March to 25 September. More than 22 million people visited the EXPO, exceeding the initial target of 15 million. Through its theme of "Nature's Wisdom", the EXPO emphasised the close links binding humanity to nature in the twenty-first century. The EXPO gave visitors a chance to experience first-hand the leading edge technologies, new social systems and future lifestyles that may provide solutions to the many serious issues now facing the entire world. Environmental considerations were of high priority at the EXPO, particularly regarding site planning, operation and transportation. Environmental conservation measures were implemented at each stage, including site preparation, during, as well as after, the event.

Detailed information is available at the official EXPO website. URL: http://www.expo2005.or.jp/

4. Kyoto Protocol Target Attainment Plan

The Kyoto Protocol Target Attainment Plan was approved by the Japanese Cabinet on 28 April. The main purpose of the plan is to ensure a 6 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions under the Kyoto Protocol and to steadily implement a continuous, and long-term, GHG emission reduction plan on a global scale. One of the pillars of the plan is to "balance environmental protection with economic development" by utilising science and technology. The plan presents a breakdown of quantitative targets for levels of emission and absorption for each type of GHG, and policy measures to accomplish them. The public and private sectors are required to cooperate further in order to promote effective utilisation of the Kyoto Mechanism - specifically, the transferral of environment-related technologies to developing countries in exchange for emission credits. The plan also stipulated the necessary cross-sectoral measures, namely a campaign to raise public awareness, initiatives by public institutions, GHG accounting, reporting and announcement, the introduction of Summer Time (daylight saving time) and the combining of policies (policy mix). Environmental (carbon) tax is not explicitly incorporated into the plan because of strong opposition by the industrial sector. It is an issue which requires comprehensive examination in the future. The first commitment period (2008-2012) under the Kyoto Protocol will soon be here.

5. The Inclusion of Shiretoko on the World Heritage List

This July the World Heritage Committee agreed on the inclusion of Japan's Shiretoko region on the list of World Heritage sites. Shiretoko Peninsula is located in northeast of Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan. The

Shiretoko Peninsula

Source: http://www.sizenken.biodic.go.jp/park/higashihokkaido/topics/20/
Copyright ©Kushiro Nature Conservation Office, Hokkaido Regional Environment Office

site covers the land from the central part of the Peninsula to its tip (Cape Shiretoko) and the surrounding marine area. It provides an outstanding example of the interaction of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, as well as extraordinary ecosystem productivity, largely influenced by the formation of seasonal sea-ice at the most southerly latitude in the northern hemisphere. The site is globally important for threatened sea birds and migratory birds, a number of salmonid species and many marine mammals. Within Japan, the World Heritage List includes three natural sites and ten cultural ones.

Detailed information about the World Heritage List is available at the official site of the World Heritage Centre. URL: http://whc.unesco.org/en/home/

Republic of Korea

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1. The First Nuclear Waste Dumpsite in the Republic of Korea (ROK)

The ROK is the world's sixth-largest nuclear power producing country, operating nineteen nuclear reactors. The Kyongju City's bid to accommodate the country's first nuclear waste dumpsite was overwhelmingly approved by city residents, beating three other candidates. Kyongju residents will receive major economic benefits as it has tentatively been designated a nuclear waste dumpsite by policy-makers. The central government promises a financial support package of US$285 million for regional development in addition to the construction of the waste facilities. The funds will be offered in the early stages of construction and the local government will be able to utilise the funds for regional development and the welfare of its residents. The support package is expected to raise the regional per capita income level by promoting employment when construction begins in early 2007. But Kyongju, whose preservation is ensured by its designation as a National Heritage and UNESCO World Heritage site, has many ancient cultural assets and thus a series of protests from civic groups and environmentalists is expected.

Source: The Korea Times, 2 November 2005

2. VOC Content Standard in Paint for the First Time in the Republic of Korea

For the first time, the ROK's Ministry of Environment (MOE) has established a content standard for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) levels in paint which came into force in July of this year. The content standard of VOCs was set up in order to allow the sale of low-VOC, eco-friendly paint, which contains 5-7% less VOCs than standard paint. The newly established standard is applied to paint used in construction and in car painting which generates about 41 per cent of the total VOC emissions in the metropolitan area. Thanks to the standard, VOC emissions are expected to decrease by 8,000 tons in 2006 and by 20,000 tons from 2006. VOCs not only cause ozone pollution of cities in summer, but also affect the human respiratory organs and can cause nerve disorder. In addition, out of the thirty-seven different kinds of VOC, benzene and toluene are both identified as carcinogenic substances. The MOE will continue to strengthen the content standard so as to increase the use of low-VOC and high-solid paint. Ultimately, it plans to replace the use of fat-soluble paints with water-soluble ones. Furthermore, the MOE plans to create a demand for low-VOC paint from paint users in order to lower VOC emissions. To do so, it will disseminate information on low-VOC paint and present various incentives.

Source: http://eng1.me.go.kr/user/envnews/envnews_list.html, 24 May, 2005

3. A Voluntary Agreement on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas and Integrated Air Pollution Substances

The Ministry of Environment (MOE) and the Korea Business Council for Sustainable Development (KBCSD) decided to further strengthen relations by signing a voluntary agreement on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The accord between both parties was agreed upon on 30 September 2005. It obliges the enterprises to investigate statistics of greenhouse gas emissions, to cooperate on a pilot scheme centred on emission exchange systems, and to establish registration and verification structures. The agreement also encourages the increasing of the fund to support new developing technologies that could reduce greenhouse gases and integrated air pollution substances and the application of these new techniques to other enterprises. As for the government, the agreement instructs that it should consider updating its policy on giving incentives to those enterprises which have made progress in achieving a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and integrated air pollution substances. The agreement also indicates that the government should organise its support system and policy promotion in order to carry out greenhouse gas reduction strategies including the development of technologies. Through the voluntary agreement, the MOE and KBCSD were able to facilitate a partnership which aims to develop tools to encourage enterprises to reduce industrial greenhouse gas emissions.

Source: http://eng1.me.go.kr/user/envnews/envnews_list.html, 4 October, 2005

4. The Ministry of Environment Initiates the Collection of Used Cell Phones

On 15 June 2005, there was a campaign in Seoul and the surrounding metropolitan districts to collect used cellular phones from elementary and middle school students. The Ministry of Environment (MOE) promoted this operation to not only raise funds but also to protect the environment from the hazardous components that cell phones may contain. Cell phones' printed circuit boards (PCB) and batteries are composed of materials like gold, silver, palladium and cobalt that can be recycled in cell phone manufacturing. However, cell phones also contain hazardous materials such as lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic which are harmful to the environment surrounding landfill sites and incinerators. The MOE added old cell phones to the list of collective goods under the 'Extended Producer Responsibility' (EPR) system. The amount of used cell phones has increased to 13 million - only 4 million (30.8 %) of which have been collected. Therefore, there are approximately 9 million old phones still left in households in Korea. The MOE will continue to raise awareness of the toxic components in cell phones and the importance of collecting and recycling used phones to promote the EPR system.

Source: http://eng1.me.go.kr/user/envnews/envnews_list.html, 29 June, 2005

Lao PDR

Ketkeo Salichanh
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1. Decree on the Compensation and Resettlement Aspect of the Development Project

The prime minister of Lao PDR approved the decree on the compensation and resettlement aspect of the development project on 7 July 2005.

The purpose of the decree is to provide protection for people potentially affected by development, whether the investment is by the government, other domestic sources or the private sector.

It sets out the principles, rules and measures that cover development projects and their potential impact upon people. The decree specifies the ways in which mitigation of adverse impact will occur. It also sets out the rules for compensation for damage caused by any proposed development, such as the involuntary acquisition or repossession of land or fixed or movable assets. This includes any change in land use or the restriction of community access to natural resources affecting community livelihoods and income sources. The decree also sets out the ways in which people that are adversely affected by development are to be assisted and, at the very least, allows for the maintenance or improvement of their pre-project incomes and living standards.

2. Decree on the Environment Protection Fund

The prime minister of Lao PDR approved the decree on the Environment Protection Fund on 6 June 2005.

The objective of the Environmental Protection Fund is to finance projects that set out to conserve or protect the environment or that aim to strengthen environmental management or environmentally related community development. It establishes the principles, rules and measures for the functioning of the fund, how it can be accessed and how it should be managed. More specifically, it endorses the use of the funds for:

1. Capacity-building and human resource development for environment safeguards.
2. The monitoring of development activities and projects with environmental and social impacts.
3. The design and implementation of plans for the integration of natural resource management.
4. Conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity.
5. Natural resource management initiatives.
6. Enabling measures that allow proponents of development projects to adequately implement environmental and social mitigation actions.

3. Lao PDR Organised an Exhibition on Environment Protection

H.E. Asang Laoly (middle) Vice Prime Minister of Lao PDR, the Chair of the National Environment Committee, cut the Ceremonial Tape as part of the Opening of the Exhibition on Environment Protection

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The exhibition on environment protection in Lao PDR was organised by the Science, Technology and Environment Agency together with the Ministry of Education (National Research Institute of Education and Science) and the Ministry of Information and Culture (Mass Media) and three provincial offices (Oudomxai, Xiengkhouang, Champasack). The exhibition was held between 22-23 September 2005 at the Lao International Trade Exhibition and Convention Centre in the capital city, Vientiane. The event was honoured by the presence of H.E Asang Laoly, vice prime minister of Lao PDR and the chair of National Environment Committee. More than 1,000 people attended the exhibition.

The objectives of the exhibition were as follows:

- To produce a display centred around the implementation of environment management and the results thereof.
- To increase people's awareness of environment protection.
- To promote cooperation with ministries and other agencies - national and international.

In his opening remarks, H.E. Asang Laoly said, "I believe that this exhibition will be a tool to encourage public organisations, development projects, industries and normal villagers for their better understanding and active participation, which will be an important contribution to environment protection in the region and the world as well".

A group photo of delegates with the prime minister of Lao PDR

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4. National Environment Committee (NEC) Conference on "Environment and Socio-Economic Development" 9-10 March 2005.

The National Environment Committee (NEC) national conference was held on 9-10 March 2005 at the International Cooperation and Training Center in Vientiane. The conference was honourably opened by H.E. Bounnhang Vorachit, prime minister of Lao PDR. The conference lasted two days. Day one was a public day under the theme of "Environment and Socio-Economic Development," attended by high level delegates from ministries, the public sector, organisations, the NEC, provincial environment committees (PECs), representatives of international organisations based in Lao PDR and representatives from the diplomatic corps, totaling 153 people. Day two was an internal meeting involving the NEC and PECs. This was attended by eighty-six delegates.

The conference was conducted with the aim of promoting the importance of the environment and its protection among the general public and to demonstrate Lao PDR's government environment policy which integrates environmental protection into socio-economic development. Another aim was to publicly announce the roles and responsibilities of the NEC as a body; specifically, that it will coordinate and give advice at a high level to ministries, provinces, ministry equivalents, mass organisations, non-profit organisations, businesses, society and the general public. The aim was to provide opportunity for discussion and the exchange of views on general attitudes, commitment and ways of communicating between central and local authorities in relation to the use and management of natural resources in Lao PDR. The conference was brought to a successful conclusion by H.E. Asang Laoly, vice prime minister of Lao PDR and chair of the National Environment Committee.

Malaysia

Norhayati Mustapha
Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)

1. Tsunami and Haze

2005 saw several post-tsunami developments including the participation of the Malaysian government in the Third Earth Observation Summit in Brussels in mid-February. At the Earthquake and Tsunami Regional Monitoring Centre of the Meteorological Services Department, a test run in April showed the capability of media editors receiving an SMS alert within five seconds, well below the five minutes target set. Moreover, to minimise loss of life and damage to property in the event of future storms, the Drainage and Irrigation Department plans to establish a debris and mudflow warning system, which will use satellite technology to monitor rainfall patterns and identify the topography and geology of mud-prone areas.

This year's haze, which started with locally-detected peat fires as early as February, worsened because of fires from hotspots in Sumatra and peaked towards mid-August when a state of emergency was declared in two towns where the Air Pollution Index reached 500. This called for an outright ban on open burning, the closure of schools and public offices, and the dispatch of firefighters to Sumatra, followed by cloud-seeding operations. As the haze receded by the end of August, court action on four local palm cultivators was initiated, and indications were positive that Indonesia will ratify the 2002 ASEAN Agreement on Trans-boundary Haze Pollution, mooted after the 1997 - 1998 episode.

2. Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

In terms of government initiatives, some progress was noted and this included a proposal to publicise Pulau Perak (near Langkawi) as a marine park; moves by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) to deter the degazettement of forest reserves; and the launching of the Kuching wetlands, Sarawak, as the fifth Ramsar site in Malaysia. The state of Sabah made particular headway as it announced plans to create a marine conservation corridor as part of the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Eco-region project. It also made gains in rainforest canopy research in the Kinabalu Park and Danum valley and launched a study on pygmy elephants. The Selangor state signed an MOU with the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) and the national power supplier (TNB) to protect firefly habitats in Kampung Kuantan, while dugongs in Johor were electronically tagged to trace migration, breeding and feeding areas with the aim of ensuring conservation.

The nation observed an easing of the 'red tide' that was affecting Sabah's west coat, turtle hatchlings (*chelonia mydas*) returned to a beach in Penang and forty Milky Storks (*mycteria cinerea*) returned to Johor. A new species of prehistoric fish of the genus *sundasalynx* was found in the Endau-Rompin National Park and in Gua Musang, Kelantan a 1,000 year-old meranti bukit tree (*Shorea platyclados*) measuring 40m in height and with

a circumference of 14.3m was discovered. The tree is believed to be the biggest in world. Rare camphor trees (*Dryobalanops aromatica*) plus the fan palm (*Livistonia endauensis*), found in Trengganu, have provided potential resources for Malaysia's efforts in biotechnology.

3. Biotechnology and Biofuel

In April, a landmark national biotechnology policy was announced. It focuses on the development of agricultural, healthcare and industrial biotechnologies, human capital, financial infrastructure, legislative and regulatory framework and emphasises strategic positioning and government commitment. Several centres were proposed: Mardi and UPM for agricultural technology; UKM for genomics and molecular biology; and the Bio-Valley in Dengkil for pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals, with the Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation chaired by the Prime Minister. The country's aspirations to be a biotech hub were intensified by the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry hosting the Biotechnology Industry Organization Annual Convention in Kuala Lumpur in mid-August 2005.

The Plantation and Commodities Ministry has drawn up a biofuel policy aimed at revitalising home-grown crops and reducing hefty oil import bills while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. This is in line with a growing global trend to increase the use of biofuels and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The ministry reported that the nation's aim is to be a major bio-diesel user by 2007 and that palm bio-fuel would replace diesel by 2008 — its sale and use to be implemented after the tabling and passing of the biofuel policy in 2006. In parallel, a MYR40 million bio-diesel plant, with technology to produce winter-fuel grade, (palm oil fuel from a methyl-ester that does not freeze in cold temperatures — a world first), will be set up in Labu, Negri Sembilan in a joint venture with a prominent plantations firm. By October, another local firm was approached by a European company to produce bio-diesel in Johor.

4. Towards Sustainable Development

Malaysia was rated comparatively well in environmental sustainability by a UN Millennium Development Goals report in January 2005. However, it was recognised that much more needs to be done as shown by the public outcry over uncontrolled development of 800 hectares of the Bukit Chahaya Shah Alam Agricultural Park in Selangor. Thirty-five companies developing the area around the park were given orders to cease work and allowed to resume only after completion of their Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). By April, in response to a proposal within the Cameron Highlands District Draft Local Plan 2003 - 2015 to have some forest reserves give way to agricultural development and a road, Pahang's chief minister promptly pledged not to open forests, thereby quashing the plan.

In June, an EIA amendment was announced that would allow the immediate issuance of orders for developers found to be cutting into a green lung or destroying a mangrove swamp to cease work. Furthermore, MONRE will offer cash rewards to those who report cases of open burning and illegal dumping of toxic waste, while a special task force to detect and combat environmental crimes will be set up. In a rare display of environmentally-friendly construction, bridges at the Grik-Titi Karangan highway were elevated to allow a wildlife crossing, fifty-six silt traps were built, and barricades were erected at several entry points to stop illegal loggers. Finally, in July the National Physical Plan launched by the Housing and Local Government Ministry reportedly confined urban development to built-up areas with existing infrastructure and social facilities and to agricultural plots with low-productivity and non-environmentally sensitive areas.

5. River and Water Management

The country has taken steps to establish water efficiency plans this year in line with commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the 3rd World Water Forum (Kyoto). Also, the National Water Resources Council has approved a proposal to carry out an integrated river basin management plan for all the 189 river basins, with all states now required to name water catchment areas. Johor has set up a formidable task force to deal with river pollution, including gazetting all water sources, catchment areas and protected zones, and Sabah is encouraging traditional laws to protect rivers, with communities practicing a unique taboo system called *tagal,* recognised by native courts. According to this system, once a stretch of river is declared protected, no one will be allowed to fish in the area and harvesting is permitted only once or twice a year. To date, the 174 communities in nine districts committed to the system are finding rivers cleaner and the number of fish increasing.

In November, two bills were proposed by the government: the Water Services Industry Bill and the National Water Services Commission Bill, whose main objective is to establish a transparent way of operating the country's water industry and sewerage system. Furthermore, the intention is to address the need for financing, to fund water services infrastructure and to overcome losses in revenue due to insufficient funds for pipe replacement. The bills also intend to address the lack of enforcement on illegal connections and non-payment of water bills. With the tabling, scheduled March 2006, and passing of the Bill(s), the current Sewerage Services Act will be repealed and appropriately, the proposed National Water Services Commission that will manage the country's water services will consist of members with no vested interest in water supply or sewage.

Mongolia

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1. Water Fee Increased

Parliament adopted an amendment regarding the "fee on water and mineral water use law" on 2 December 2004. This means that the fee applied to every cubic metre of water intended for industrial and service use was increased and the minimum and maximum rate of the fee was legislated.

According to Government Resolution N°7 of January 2005, the fee on every cubic metre of water intended for industrial and service use was increased from MNT 6-10/m^3 to MNT 100-150/m^3.

This measure was taken in an effort to protect the environment and eliminate gold mining, especially at placer mines where much water is wasted and polluted. Moreover, the fact that the measure has increased the state budget for environmental issues and was an economic incentive is thought to be highly significant.

Reference: Journal of State Information, N° 5, 2005.

2. "Green belt" Programme

The government of Mongolia adopted a national "Green belt" programme which was presented in the form of Government Resolution N° 44. The goal of this programme is to create a "Green belt" which totally covers the area between the Mongolian Gobi Desert and the steppe regions in an effort to reduce the currently intensified desertification, loss of forest reserves, sand movement and dust and sand storms caused by climate change and anthropogenic activities.

This long-term programme will be realised in a step-by-step process, including the involvement of the local community, in harmonising

environmental and socio-economic development policies and measures with particular attention paid to the specific features of the respective areas. The national "Green belt" programme will be implemented in three phases, with the completion date of 2035. The "green belt" or "ECO-TRASS" will be built with the main eco-strip crossing from the west to the east and will also include several sub-strips from north to south. The green belt location is shown in the attached picture. The width of the main strip is 600 metres and the length is 2500 km. The sub-strip is 430 metres wide and about 1200 km long.

The funding required for the programme will be obtained from state, central and local budgets, donor governments, loans from international organisations, technical assistance, gratis aid, donations from institutions, economic entities, and other sources.

The expected outcome of the programme is a 1.6 per cent increase in Mongolia's forest reserve and positive changes in the Gobi Desert and steppe eco-system. In addition, areas of saxaul forest will be conserved, deciduous forest expanded, a favourable climate will be formed and ecological balance will be maintained.

Reference: "Journal of State Information," N^{o} 14, 2005

3. A Buddhist Park was Established

A new Buddhist garden and park was set up in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia, on the personal initiative and contributions of Mr. U. Barsbold, Minister of Nature and the Environment of Mongolia, as well as the Venerable Lama Guru Deva Renboochi. The park stands in the southern part of Ulaanbaatar by the sacred mountain of Bogdo-Khan Uul.

The opening ceremony was held on 27 September 2005. The park occupies about five hectares of land and is a cultural resort that includes a large monument to Buddha and a religion and culture centre named after Zanabazar, the first Bogdo of Mongolia,

Buddhist politician and teacher of meditation.

The height of the Buddha statue, including its base, is twenty-three metres. It is the first monument to Buddha ever erected in Mongolia. This park has now become a favourite place for Mongolian and foreign visitors alike. It should also be noted that the Venerable High Lama of the Republic of Korea, Kwal Ahn Kal, has contributed much to the construction of this park.

Reference: "Daily News" 28 September 2005

4. Amendments to the Environmental Protection Law

The amendments to the Environmental Protection Law were adopted by parliament on 18 November 2005. The main changes to the law are described as follows:

- Provision to increase public participation in the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of natural resources, monitoring and inspection activities, and to trigger public initiatives, consult, support, organise and cooperate with local communities is added. The term "the community group" or *nukhurlul* means, "a voluntary group of community citizens that is formed in compliance with the Civil Code of Mongolia."
- Citizens may own the plants and/or forest land that they have cultivated or the animals they have bred, the water

pools, ponds, or lakes on the piece of land that they, or their business entity, or their organisation owns or possesses, in compliance with existing legislation.

— The government of Mongolia, taking into account the category of the state protected area, the conservation regulations and bylaws, special features, shall determine the specific zone, and size of the territory to be controlled by one ranger.

— Mechanism to develop and approve procedures on hiring volunteer rangers and end-result rewarding mechanism. Assurance of social security and the freedom to exercise their rights have been developed for the state inspectors and rangers.

Reference: "Today" newspaper, N^{o} 273, 28 Sept. 2005

Nepal

Phool Chandra Shrestha
Freelance Consultant

1. Rhino Success Story Receives a Jolt

Nepal's success story in rhino conservation has been a matter of pride for Nepali conservationists for years. But the Rhino Count 2005 has given a jolt to this pride. Rhino conservation in Nepal began in 1972 with the inception of the national park. There were less than 100 rhinos at that time, around 900 less than what the park boasted in the 1950s. But the figure grew six-fold in the next three decades.

The Rhino Count 2005 revealed that the numbers of the endangered one-horned Asiatic rhino have declined to 372 from 544 in 2000. Altogether, ninety-four rhinos fell victim to poaching between 2001-2005 while sixty-six died natural deaths in the Royal Chitwan National Park in central Nepal. And thirty-seven more were translocated to the Royal Bardiya National Park and the Royal Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve.

Lax security in the National Park, due to the extra strain put on security personnel by the Maoist insurgency, natural death and degradation of their habitat are the major causes for the decline in the rhino population. Conservationists are also worried about the widening gap between the birth and mortality rate of the rhinos. At present the annual birth rate is 3.88 where as mortality is 17.84.

Source: The Kathmandu Post, 20 April 2005

2. No Place in the City for Old Vehicles

The Department of Transport Management (DoTM) is set to scan and test the emission levels of 20-year and older vehicles so as to displace them from the Kathmandu Valley within the next two years.

Citing deteriorating environmental condition in the valley, the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management has decided to immediately displace all the 20-year and older vehicles which fail the emissions test. Even those vehicles which pass the test will only be allowed to remain in the valley for the next two years.

The DoTM is preparing to conduct surprise emissions tests to displace 20-year and older vehicles from the valley as per the government's decision. Two years ago, the Supreme Court ordered the government to displace 20-year and older vehicles from the valley to reduce the increasing pollution in the valley as the older vehicles are significant contributors to the city's air pollution.

A monitoring unit has already been set up under the convenorship of the director-general of the DoTM. The vehicles that fail the surprise emissions test will be displaced immediately while those maintaining the standard will only be allowed to remain in the valley for the next two years.

Source: The Himalayan Times, 13 March 2005

3. Okharpauwa Landfill Site Comes into Operation

After ten long years, the Okharpauwa Sanitary Landfill Site, which was taken as a sustainable solution to the problem of Kathmandu Valley's solid waste management, formally came into operation by the dumping of 30 tons of garbage collected from Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Lalitpur Sub-metropolitan city.

The government had decided to develop the site at Sisdol, Okharpauwa of Nuwakot district, as a long-term solution to the valley's waste problems in 1995. The site will be used for three years and will be able to accommodate 295,000 cubic metres of waste. Another landfill site will be ready within three years at Bandhade Danda in Okharpauwa.

Locals in Okharpauwa welcomed the garbage trucks with garlands and vermilion at the landfill site. After the government decision to develop Okharpauwa as a landfill site, special programmes of education, environment, and health were introduced in the village, which have benefited the villagers. The locals said that the government helped to improve the quality of education of over fifteen schools around the landfill site. The collected waste in the valley will be sorted and categorised at the Teku Transfer Station before being taken to Okharpauwa.

Source: The Rising Nepal, 7 June 2005

4. Polluted Narayani a Threat to Aquatic Life

Increasing levels of pollution in the Narayani River caused by the rapid pace of urbanisation and industrialisation, are threatening its aquatic life. Hazardous chemicals which are disposed of in the river by industries in Nawalparasi are to blame for the surge in pollution.

According to the Royal Chitwan National Park, a quality test of river water conducted by French environmental scientists has warned that pollution will lead to the extinction of aquatic life. While water on the upper part of the bridge was less polluted, pollution was above the desired levels downstream. The practice of disposing industrial waste by the Bhrikuti Pulp and Paper Industries, Gorkha Brewery, Sumi Distillery and Shree Distillery is also worth mentioning.

Shyam Bajima, an ecologist at the National Park and Wildlife Conservation Department, said that hazardous chemicals could be seen floating on the surface of the river. Fish and alligators living in such waters would eventually die.

According to Shiva Raj Bhatta, the head conservation officer of the park, chemicals have affected fish and alligators. Of the 300 alligators which were released into the river some time ago, only seventy are now alive.

Source: The Himalayan, 3 February 2005

5. A New Way to Conserve Herbs

The stage is set for the handover of twenty-two Community Biodiversity Registers (CBRs) to the concerned groups in ten selected districts. In short, CBRs are lists of herbs. Also listed are places where these herbs are found, their uses and the various ways in which they are farmed. Billed as a novel way to ensure conservation of herbs and knowledge about them, the CBRs will set a new pace in the conservation of medicinal herbs.

The modus operandi evolved during the course of drawing up the twenty-two CBRs, and consists of documenting traditional knowledge by following a definite methodology, and at the same time including the input of the local people. The CBRs are important because other communities can follow the process outlined in the CBRs if the government decides to implement similar projects elsewhere.

The legal basis for the handover is the Nepal Biodiversity Strategy 2002 and the Draft Bill on Access to Genetic Resource and Benefit Sharing,

which addresses and streamlines important issues related to the documentation. Nepal is among the top twenty-five countries with rich biodiversity where farmers cultivate 700 medicinal plants out of the total 1,800 species of herbs found in Nepal.

Source: The Himalayan, 17 April 2005

New Zealand

Claire Gibson (Information and Publications Officer) and
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1. Marine Environment Classification

A new marine environment classification system was launched by the government in July 2005. The system classifies over 8 million square kilometres of ocean around New Zealand using scientific information collected over the past thirty years. The classification is based on eight factors: depth, tides, waves, the shape of the seabed, water temperature, the salinity and concentration of nutrients, the depth of water that is being mixed by the wind and the amount of sunlight the surface water receives. Various combinations of these factors determine the environmental character at a specific location.

Using a geographic information system (GIS), it provides information and maps of physical and biological variations of the oceans within New Zealand's exclusive economic zone. It enables the production of environmental baselines from which decisions can be made about resource use and ecosystem management. The system will be useful to local and central government as well as industry.

Source: Ministry for the Environment, Environz, August 2005
www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=23691

2. New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol was launched in March 2005. It is a platform to enable New Zealand towns and cities to be more successful through quality urban design. The protocol is a voluntary commitment to specific urban design initiatives by signatory organisations, which include central and local government, the property sector, design professionals, professional institutes and other groups. It is designed to support and incorporate values that will make towns and cities healthy, safe and attractive places where business, social and cultural life can flourish.

The Urban Design Protocol identifies seven essential design qualities that together create quality urban design:

- Context: seeing buildings, places and spaces as part of whole towns and cities.
- Character: reflecting and enhancing the

Hayes Paddock - a state housing area developed in the 1930s

Copyright ©Greg Mason

distinctive character, heritage and identity of the urban environment.

- Choice: ensuring diversity and choice for people.
- Connections: enhancing how different networks link together for people.
- Creativity: encouraging innovative and imaginative solutions.
- Custodianship: ensuring design is environmentally sustainable, safe and healthy.
- Collaboration: communicating and sharing knowledge across sectors, professions and with communities.

Source: Ministry for the Environment, Environz, May 2005
www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/urban/design-protocol/index.html
www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/urban/design-protocol-mar05/html/page3.html

3. Drinking Water Standard

The government has begun consultation on a new national environmental standard for human drinking water. The proposed standard focuses on protecting drinking water resources through ensuring that activities in a water supply catchment do not pollute water to an extent where it cannot be made safe to drink. This standard will ultimately result in safer drinking water as it will lower the risks of contaminants exceeding the capabilities of treatment plants.

Input to the standard is being sought from the general public, water quality experts, managers of water supplies and sources, and communities. The Ministry for the Environment and Ministry of Health are working together to develop and implement the standard under the Resource Management Act (1991). The proposed standard is likely to be introduced in 2006.

Source: www.mfe.govt.nz/news/water-standard-24sep05.html
www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/drinking-water-source-standard.html
Ministry for the Environment, Environz, February 2005
Ministry for the Environment, Environz, November 2005

A glass of New Zealand tap water
Copyright ©Claire Gibson

4. Business and Environment-Friendly Tax Changes

Recent changes to New Zealand tax laws are enabling businesses to claim tax deductions for environmental expenditure. An immediate tax deduction is now available to businesses that choose to clean up contaminated sites. An immediate deduction is also available for costs incurred in investigating and testing options to avoid, remedy or mitigate the discharge of contaminants and for environmental monitoring. Businesses can also elect for some of their tax payments to be directed into a new voluntary site restoration fund which can be used to help pay for future site restoration and monitoring.

Source: www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/land/infosheet-environment-tax-changes-oct05
Ministry for the Environment, Environz, August 2005

Pakistan

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1. Can We Avoid the Worst Environmental Consequences of an Earthquake?

The 7.6 magnitude earthquake that struck on 8 October in and around Pakistan is known to have caused more than 50,000 deaths, hundreds of thousands injured, and many without warm clothing and shelter. The severe winter in that mountainous region is approaching and will affect many of the earthquake if prompt action for relief, recovery, and reconstruction are not taken by local, national, and international organisations. The environmental consequences of the earthquake are critical and should be the top priority, as all the disaster management strategies would be ineffective without the integration of the environmental aspects. For example, the landslides and flooding can be avoided if the forests are kept intact in these mountains. However, some of the decision-makers may not be able to foresee the implications of reconstruction at the cost of damaging the environment. One of the top decision-makers was suggesting to build a new city by clearing the forests rather than reconstruct the devastated city. Environmentalists are at a complete loss, as during these tragedies the sensitivities are high and selling the environment is not an easy task in the rural areas. Some decision-makers can easily capitalise on the public emotions by telling that environmentalists are against the relief and recovery and that the environmentalists value forests more than the people. However, with a solid case, the environmentalists can make decision-makers realise that the destruction caused by the recent earthquake is a reminder that development and construction in disregard of environmental concerns could wreak havoc and immense loss of life and property.

Source: Daily "The News" 18 October 2005 / BBC online 20 October 2005

2. Supreme Court Plays its Role to Safeguard the Environment

Due to environmental concerns, the Supreme Court, on October 13, ordered a halt to the construction activity of a luxury housing project, the Chalets Housing Scheme near Islamabad, located only a few kilometres from the boundary of the Margalla Hills National Park. The highest court has asked the government to consider revising the construction regulations in the wake of a massive earthquake. If this scheme goes ahead without environmental considerations, more housing schemes will follow and multiply the impacts. The site of the scheme also falls in the catchment areas of the Khanpur Dam, one of the main sources of water for the twin cities of Islamabad-Rawalpindi. The sewage, other pollutants and silt will damage the freshwater bodies.

Source: Daily "Dawn" 14 October 2005 / Daily "The News" 14 October 2005

3. Strategies to Promote Environmental-friendly Vehicles

Pakistan's biggest province, Punjab, is implementing various strategies to promote environmental-friendly vehicles in the province. The government has imposed a ban on the manufacture and registration of new two-stroke engine rickshaws in the big cities. It has also created a green fund of one billion rupees for advancing interest-free loans for the purchase of four-stroke rickshaws and conversion of two-stroke rickshaws to four stroke. Furthermore, to promote CNG buses, only owners of these buses will be given route permits and permission to operate, in four major cities, viz. Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, and Rawalpindi. These strategies will help to decrease the level of air pollution in big cities of the province.

Source: Daily "Dawn" 3 October 2005

4. Is the Windmills Project a better Option than Nuclear Energy?

Many countries are arguing for the promotion of nuclear energy on the pretext that it is 'environmental-friendly.' The arguments and counter-arguments on the short-term and long-term environmental impacts of nuclear energy from researchers, politicians, civil society, and other stakeholders are making stories in print and electronic media. One of the best strategies, from the opponents of the nuclear world, is to promote the alternative energy options, including energy from windmills, the sun, ocean waves, underground heat and currents. Many European countries are making good advances in capping alternative energy sources and promoting the idea of a nuclear-free world. Early this year, a Dutch company signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sindh government, the second largest province in Pakistan, to invest 100 million euros to set up windmills in the province along the coastal belt. If the alternative energy options work as expected, then the proponents of nuclear energy may change their camps.

Source: Daily "Dawn" 24 May 2005

5. MoUs for the Preservation of the Indus River Dolphins

The Indus civilisation is an ancient civilisation having a history of more than 5000 years. The Indus River, a symbol of life, provides water to all the stakeholders to flourish. However, the unequal choice and voice of the weaker stakeholders have changed the balance. For example, one of the most famous endangered species of the Indus, the blind dolphins, is near extinction. The environmentalists try to safeguard the interests of the weaker stakeholders. In this regard, the Worldwide Fund for Nature Pakistan (WWF-P) signed a MoU with various governmental agencies for the conservation of the endangered Indus River dolphins. The general public is hoping that the MoU will bring the targeted results and the dolphins will again flourish in the beautiful waters of the Indus.

Source: Daily "Times" 22 April 2005

6. IUCN Unveils the Report on the State of the Environment in Sindh

Great efforts are being made by the IUCN to highlight the environmental issues at the provincial and local level. The IUCN-Pakistan Sindh Programme unveiled its first-ever report entitled "Sindh: State of Environment and Development," both in print and electronic forms. It provides information on the previously non-existent status of the environment and development in Sindh in one volume. This report assesses the environmental issues of Sindh province. Sindh is experiencing a depletion of its floral resources at an increasingly high rate because of a rise in both human and animal population resulting from over-exploitation,

says an IUCN's compendium of the environment and development in Sindh. The report points out that the migratory process has been impoverishing the rural areas. "Karachi contains 30 per cent of Sindh's total population and 63 per cent of its urban population," it adds. "As a result it exercises a strong influence on the economy and employment patterns in the province."

Source: Daily "The News" 3 June 2005

The Philippines

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1. International Research Expedition Discovers Rich Concentration of Marine Biodiversity

An international research team of about seventy scientists from seventeen countries recently announced its initial findings, claiming the discovery of hundreds of new crabs, shrimps, and micro-shell species in the deep waters of Panglao Island in the province of Bohol. The team described its scientific expedition as the most comprehensive coral reef survey of mollusks and crustaceans ever undertaken anywhere in the world.

In the waters around Panglao Island, the team collected about 1,200 different species of crab and shrimp and the project on the whole has catalogued more than 5,000 species of mollusk and 1,200 species of decapod crustacean, many of which are new to marine science.

"We expect that our results will feed new concepts in conservation biology and the protection of coral reefs, which together with rainforests are biologically the richest ecosystems on earth," declared Dr. Philippe Bouchet, co-principal investigator of the Panglao Project from the Musé um national d'Histoire naturelle of France.

Officially titled the Panglao Marine Biodiversity Project 2004: Survey of the Deep-water Benthic Fauna of Bohol Sea and Adjacent Waters, it was initiated by the Total Foundation and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the University of San Carlos in Cebu City and the Asean Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation. "The project is important for the Philippines considering that much remains to be learned about the diversity of various ecosystems and that the loss of these species would eliminate the chance to study how flora and fauna help in the overall integrity of the environment we live in," said Dr. Danilo Largo, the project's co-principal investigator from the University of San Carlos.

As a follow-up to the Panglao Project 2004, the Panglao Project 2005 was conducted over two weeks starting 18 May and covered 80 areas in the Bohol Sea, Siquijor, Leyte and Northern Mindanao. The expedition collected some 20 drums of specimens, representing thousands of mollusk species, 600 species of crustacean, hundreds of echinoderms, and hundreds of species of fish. Included in the catch were still-to-be-named deep-sea shrimp specimens from two relatively rare crab families, *Retroplumidae* and *Tymolidae.* The results of the Panglao Project 2005 were described by Dr. Bouchet as proving "the richness of the Philippines' marine biodiversity, as well as its scientific value and heritage significance for the rest of the world".

Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2 April 2005 and 7 October 2005.

2. The World Bank Estimates Huge Losses Due to Environmental Degradation

In its 2004 *Philippine Environment Monitor,* the World Bank set out the economic costs of environmental degradation, pointing out that the Philippines is thus annually losing approximately USD2 billion, more than PHP100 billion.

"Increased health costs from exposure to polluted air in Manila alone were thought to have totaled more than USD400 million a year," the *Environment Monitor* noted. Water pollution is costing the country about USD1.3 billion each year. The Philippines is also losing around USD420 million due to poor management of its fishery resources.

"Forest cover in the country declined from 21 million hectares in 1900 to only 5.4 million hectares in 1988," the World Bank report observed.

In a public forum where the report was launched on 20 June this year, the World Bank Philippines country director Joachim von Amsberg further noted:

"The Philippines has one of the lowest levels of forest cover per capita in the world. As habitats shrink, biodiversity is increasingly endangered. Coastal resources, especially coral reefs, of which over 90 per cent are at high risk, mangroves and seagrasses face threats from coastal zone development, expanding agriculture and destructive fishing. The fisheries catch has been declining in many areas."

Amsberg said that "political will, stronger enforcement of laws, modern public institutions, and public participation can still play a part in improving the environment and releasing this potential for the Philippines.

Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, 19 January 2005, 21 June 2005; Philippine Star, 21 June 2005; Daily Tribune, 21 June 2005.

3. Protected Areas are Used as Sites for Energy Resource Exploration

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recently disclosed that nine of the fifteen projects in energy development being undertaken by the government and private companies are situated in protected landscapes and seascapes or protected areas. A report by the DENR's Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) indicated that exploration activities are in progress in protected areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao; these areas have been identified as potential sources of oil, gas and geothermal energy.

The protected areas of Mt. Apo in Davao, Mt. Kanlaon in Negros Occidental, the Balinsasayao Twin Lakes National Park in Negros Occidental and Malagnao Volcano Nature Park in Leyte have all been proposed as sites for geothermal energy development. 710 hectares of Mt. Apo have already been earmarked for such an energy project.

A hydro-electric power project is proposed in the Aklan River Watershed Forest Reserve, according to the PAWB executive director, Mundita Lim. She said that in the protected area of San Roque, Pangasinan, a hydro-electric power project is now being conducted.

Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, 3 September 2005.

4. Japan Resumes Forestry Assistance after Twenty-eight Years

Until its resumption recently, the last time the Japanese government gave assistance to forest management was when Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) funded the Philippine-Japan Forest Development Project in Pantabangan in the province of Nueva Ecija, in 1976. Over the past fourteen years, the Japanese government instead moved to disaster-mitigation projects in the provinces of Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales, in the wake of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption of 1991.

The present project, as JICA resumed its development assistance, is the "Enhancement of Community-Based Forest Management Project," according to Regional Executive Director of the DENR, Regidor de Leon This is a five-year project to be undertaken nationwide until 2009. DENR Regional Deputy Director, Ricardo Calderon said that the programme would include training, information and policy enforcement. "To begin with, seven model sites have been included in the project's forest management aspect," he said.

JICA chief, Hideki Miyakawa disclosed that these sites have been selected from twenty-two proposed areas in the region. These consist of 50 hectares in Magalang; 2000 in Sapang Bato and Angeles, both in Pampanga province; 400 in General Tinio, Nueva Ecija province; 174 hectares in Botolan, 5,000 in Sta. Cruz and 50 in Masinloc, all in the province of Zambales.

De Leon told the press that the DENR decided to undertake the project with the assistance of JICA because only 45 per cent or 433,276 hectares of the region's forest lands remain, as of 2003.

Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer, 23 September 2005.

Russian Federation

Anatoly Lebedev
Bureau for Regional Outreach Campaigns (BROC)

1. Possible Privatisation of Forests Causes Protest Campaign

Broad public discussion on the new Russian Forest Code, drafted initially by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, was launched in 2004. Its core principle, which caused protests amongst foresters and NGOs, was the possible privatisation of the currently 100 per cent state-owned forests and a complete absence of a guarantee of public use or maintenance of environmental and social values. Also, there was no clear guarantee of who holds regional authority regarding forest management. Protesters from all the forest-rich regions of the Russian Federation succeeded in involving more forestry experts in their cause. Since the draft had been submitted to the State Duma in 2005, some initiated law suits against the government concerning obligatory sections which lacked environmental impact assessments.

Currently, all the fundamental problems remain, such as the lack of a guarantee for all people to enter forests for recreation, hunting and the harvesting of non-timber products. Instead of a public discussion of this code, vital to millions of forest dependent citizens, its authors, supported by the president, have employed underhand tactics. They have excluded the details on forest privatisation from the main draft, but have suggested that another draft law regarding "the practical implementation of the Forest Code" be drawn up. It is obvious to many experts that this will give the state government the perfect opportunity to immediately commence privatisation by means of the existing civil code, as soon as the basic Forest Code is adopted.

Source: BROC's compilation by own sources, mass media and the Internet

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2. President Forced Ministry to Start Controversial Pipeline

After two stages of public hearings on the Siberia-Pacific oil pipeline and the collection of hundreds of objections regarding the Baikal route and Pacific terminal location, groups of Japanese and Russian senior officials visited Perevoznaya Bay in Primorye this summer. The bay was designated the site for the terminal construction. The Japanese kept silent, but three Russian ministers, including the most influential German Gref of the Economy and

Trade Ministry, agreed that Perevoznaya is the worst and most dangerous solution, and added that several perfect locations around Nakhodka should be urgently scrutinised and one selected.

At the same time, due to the lawsuits of some citizens, the District Court in Khabarovsk recognised the positive conclusion of the environmental impact assessment of the project's investment justification stage as not legitimate, which was the key legal basis for the government to start a feasibility study. Thus, the whole project and any activities in its framework became illegal according to Russian legislation until all the criticised points are changed and any new proposal is subjected to the new impact assessment procedure, including any hearings. But following national legislation appeared to be too long and complex for the Russian oil lobby. After its protesting at the Green Press conference in Moscow in November, with the aim of protecting the World Heritage Site of Baikal and the endangered Amur leopard and its habitat near Perevoznaya, a lobby succeeded in forcing President Putin to pass the order to ministries to adopt all illegal solutions to the project's problems and to move to construction straight away.

Source: BROC's compilation by own sources, mass media and the Internet

3. Economic Congress States that Resources in the Russian Far East (RFE) are being Lost

The first Far-East International Economic Congress in Khabarovsk, conducted by the Russian administration, presented detailed analysis of the core resource-based and environmentally essential industries and factors determining strategic development of the regional resource policy. At the series of meetings, senior regional and national governmental experts stated that the level of losses in resources, population, budget revenues and territorial management is catastrophic and needs a comprehensive system of legislation and governmental and industrial solutions in order to preserve the region as the key resource store for the Russian Federation. At the meeting on fisheries, it was highlighted that although the official figures show that only 60 per cent of the permitted annual catch allowance of marine resources in the RFE is being taken advantage of, in reality, fishing companies are actually catching twice the allowance via false documentation, poaching and trade, hidden from inspections and customs. According to Japanese customs data, thanks to the absence of appropriate and up-to-date governmental regulations, more than 30,000 tons of valuable crab species were supplied by Russians to Japan in 2004, which is 6 times more than is legally available to catch. As a result, the Russian government lost USD 1 billion, although fishermen themselves were obviously temporarily satisfied. Illegal trade of salmon and sturgeon caviar for the markets of Moscow, China and Japan exceeds RUB 3 billions. Congress proposed a comprehensive set of recommendations to the government, but there is a little hope they will be followed.

Source: BROC's compilation by own sources, mass media and the Internet

4. New Government Structures are Unable to Protect the Environment

A group of new governmental agencies of resource management and environmental control to come into practice in 2005. But, the Forest Agency and Environmental Control Service both remained under the Nature Resources Ministry, and were held back all year by the shock of their lack of independence. Instead of hundreds of state forest and environmental inspectors, formerly authorised by these two agencies to control resource use in each administrative territory, several persons remained in the framework of the regional bodies — the Special Marine Inspections,

"Rosprirodnadzor" (Environmental Supervision) and the newly created Environmental and Technical Supervision Service — " Rosecotechnadzor," responsible to the government directly. The last two are authorised to conduct environmental impact assessment, but are still unsure of the procedural aspects, since any serious project is subject to both environmental and technical scrutiny. Wildlife and hunting inspection is being combined with the supervision of food and fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture. Such a combination, although at first seeming partly acceptable, creates a huge set of problems for inspecting officials in that they must combine all the complexities of monitoring remote areas, which is where the most resource poaching occurs and no inspecting capacity remains feasible after all the administrative reforms. Moreover, the tight budget these new inspectors receive only provides them with new incentives to accept bribes during their constant travelling over huge remote areas.

Source: BROC's compilation by own sources, mass media and the Internet

5. RFE Governors will Turn Raw Fish Back Home

The federal law on fisheries, adopted just before the start of 2005, was thoroughly analysed and implemented in all maritime regions. Considering the fact that the fisheries present the most significant part of the regional economy in the Far-East, and that illegal, corrupted sectors of the industry create the biggest economic, social, environmental and political problems, the regional fisheries lobby and administrations have started to urgently develop new strategies and tactics, based on the new legislation. The primary troubles regarding the fate of biological marine resources and their sustainable use are currently produced by the completely inadequate methodology of resource inventory, biased and corruptive modes of distribution amongst administrative territories of the annual allowable catch (AAC) (under which priority is given to Moscow-based companies,) and the incredibly high fees at port and customs, taxes and bribes that discourage fishermen from bringing their raw products back to the Russian Federation. Also, the lack of investment in small fishing companies and an absence of a state strategy to renew the fishing fleet gives no hope to most fishing businesses. Therefore, RFE governors announced that they will make it their main priority to do their best to remove obstacles that impede the movement of fish, caught in the Russian economic zone, to domestic processing facilities and thus to keep all the profit from the final product within the Russian Federation. To support the small fishing businesses, the governor of Primorye launched a new programme of small and middle-size fishing boat construction in local yards.

Source: BROC's compilation by own sources, mass media and the Internet

Fishermen on the Okhotsk Sea
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Singapore

Koh Kheng Lian
Director
Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law

1. The Singapore Green Plan 2012 Review (SGP2012)

In April 2005, three focus groups were established to review the following aspects of the SGP2012: Air & Climate Change; Water and Clean Land; Nature & Public Health. It is significant that the representatives in these groups were from the people, public and private (3Ps) sectors. The synergistic "3Ps" represent an integrated management approach to the environment as recommended by Agenda 21. Below is a summary of some of the recommendations from the groups:

- reduce carbon dioxide emissions further
- mandate household appliances and vehicles to carry energy-efficiency labels
- reduce per capita domestic consumption
- reduce waste
- have more joint projects among the public, private and people sectors, for example, in reforestation, public education and outreach activities

Source: Milieu, Oct/Nov 2005

2. "Water for All: Conserve, Value, Enjoy"

The above is the new tagline officially launched on 21 February 2005 by the Public Utilities Board (PUB) of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources. It is also in line with the 3Ps approach.

Two important events in 2005 marked new milestones in Singapore's diversified supply of water resources.

- Official Opening of the Singapore Desalination Plant

The official opening of Singapore's "fourth water tap," i.e., desalinated water, was held on 15 September 2005. This was in conjunction with the opening of the International Desalination Association (IDA) World Congress on Desalination and Water Reuse held in Singapore from 11 to 16 September 2005. To date the plant, SingSpring situated in Tuas, is the largest reverse osmotic desalination plant in the world. The pre-treated water is pumped at high pressure through semi-permeable membranes to separate the water from dissolved solids. The treated water is blended with reservoir water for use in homes.

- Deep Tunnel Sewerage System (DTSS)

After four years of tunneling, the DTSS was completed on 21 February 2005. The Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR), Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim, said: "The DTSS is a critical piece of the system that allows us to channel used water to water reclamation plants and then on to NEWater* factories, thus allowing us to 'close the loop'."

*NEWater is a term used in the recycling of water from sewerage; 'closing the loop' refers to the connection

The Tuas desalination plant, the first for Singapore and the Asia-Pacific

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of water from all sources in Singapore, water from the reservoir, impounded water, NEWater and desalinated water.

Source: Waternet — www. pub.gov.sg

3. Case Concerning Land Reclamation by Singapore in and around the Straits of Johor (Malaysia v Singapore), 2005: Environmental Impact

On 5 September 2003, Malaysia made the following four requests to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) for provisional measures:

a. That Singapore shall, pending the decision of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, suspend all current land reclamation activities in the vicinity of the maritime boundary between the two states, or, of areas claimed as territorial waters by Malaysia (and specifically around Pulau Tekong and Tuas);

b. To the extent that it has not already done so, provide Malaysia with full information as to the current and projected works, including, in particular, their proposed extent, their method of construction, the origin and kind of materials used, and designs for coastal protection and remediation (if any);

c. Afford Malaysia a full opportunity to comment upon the works and their potential impacts having regard, *inter alia,* to the information provided; and

d. Agree to negotiate with Malaysia concerning any remaining unresolved issues.

ITLOS rejected Malaysia's key application to order Singapore to stop its reclamation works at Pulau Tekong and Tuas but did stipulate that Singapore must not conduct its land reclamation in ways that might cause irreparable prejudice to the rights of Malaysia or serious harm to the marine environment.

In January 2005, the two parties reached an agreement based on the findings of independent experts (GOE). Among these are exchange of information regarding matters affecting the respective environments in the Straits of Johor; monitoring activities in relation to their respective environments in the Straits of Johor and addressing any adverse impacts, if necessary. These activities include the monitoring of water quality to protect the marine and estuarine environment; and monitoring ecology.

4. Fine Tuning of the Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) to Curb Traffic Gridlock

Over the last thirty years, Singapore has been introducing innovative measures to curb vehicular air pollution and to ease traffic congestion (stationary cars emit a great deal of air pollution). One of the mechanisms is to

impose a tax on cars entering the central business districts between certain peak hours through the ERP system whereby a charge is made upon the areas. In October 2005, the time periods and number of days were extended in some of these areas.

5. Capacity Building in Environment

On 28 October 2005, eight organisations, including the Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL), entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalise their commitment to jointly promote Singapore's capacity-building efforts through environmentally related training and technology transfer to the region and beyond, under the Singapore Environmental Training Programme (SETP). "No single organisation holds all the answers to the environmental issues that we face. While sharing knowledge with our counterparts in other countries is important, it is also important for us to share among ourselves so that we can have a more integrated understanding of the Singapore's environmental experience and leverage on each other's strengths and expertise. Singapore has learnt and benefited from the sound environmental practices of many countries. While we still have much to learn, we are now in a position to share our unique experiences with our neighbours and friends," said Mr Lee Yuen Hee, CEO of the National Environment Agency, in his address at the MOU signing ceremony held at the Singapore Environment Institute.

Source: http://www.nea.gov.sg/cms/sei/Events.html

Signing of SETP MOU, 28 October 2005

Sri Lanka

Nalaka Gunawardene
Director and Chief Executive Officer
TVE Asia Pacific

1. Tsunami's Ecological Damage Assessed

Sri Lanka suffered the second highest number of casualties from the Asian Tsunami that hit on 26 December 2004 and sustained massive losses to property and livelihoods. Throughout 2005, scientists continued to assess the ecological and economic impact of one of the biggest ever disasters to hit the island.

The tsunami flooded two thirds of the island's 1,770km coastline. The receding waves left the ground water contaminated and the land salinated. This lead to crop damage, particularly in the east, where one third of the country's rice harvest is usually produced. The damage inflicted on farming was second only to that experienced by the fishing industry.

Meanwhile, a government decision to disallow the construction of any new buildings within 100 metres of the shore proved highly controversial. Sri Lanka's already dense population is disproportionately concentrated in coastal areas, and this new ban meant tens of thousands whose houses were damaged or destroyed could not return to their land to rebuild their homes. As the year ended, the ban was still in place but mired in political bickering with the scientific community also divided on this issue.

Sources: Science and Development Network: http://

The tsunami damaged coastal houses and lands

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www.scidev.net/News/index.cfm?fuseaction=readNews&itemid=1856&language=1
FAO study: http://www.fao.org/ag/tsunami/assessment/srilanka-assess.html

2. Indian Shipping Canal Threatens Marine Environment

The most sustained environmental story of the year concerned the Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project (SSCP) that India has embarked upon. An engineering vision for 150 years, the mega-project will dredge the shallow sea between northern Sri Lanka and southern India to create a navigable canal across the Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay and the Palk Straits. India expects massive economic gains from linking its east and west coasts. Until now ships have had to go around Sri Lanka, adding 400km to their journey.

Environmentalists in both countries have expressed deep concerns that constructing and operating this 260km long canal will have many adverse impacts. The area concerned is a backwater, with a ridge called Adam's Bridge acting as a barrier to the flow of water through it. These relatively warm waters have a complex of ecosystems, with the highest marine biodiversity in seas around the whole Indian subcontinent. Among others, this is a habitat for sperm whales, dolphins and dugongs. With many coral reefs in shallow seas, it is also a fertile fish breeding ground that benefits fishermen of both countries.

Scientists caution that the inevitable change of ocean currents through the narrow stretch of sea could have long-term effects and intensify coastal erosion. When commercial shipping commences, the threat of pollution and oil spills would also increase.

The project's environmental impact assessment (EIA), completed in 2004, has ignored these and other impacts on Sri Lanka. Activists are pushing for a wider, fresh debate but they have been frustrated by the Sri Lankan government's silence. With construction commencing in 2005, it's doubtful if much could be changed now.

Sources: http://www.ejustice.lk/article-Sethusamudram-%20Who%20stand%20for..htm
http://www.climate.lk/sethu/
http://sethusamudram.gov.in/EIA.asp

3. GM Foods Continue to Make News

In 2001, Sri Lanka became the first country to ban the import of genetically modified (GM) food. But the government soon came under pressure from western countries — who cited WTO rules — and was forced to suspend the ban. The issue has been in limbo since, due to official apathy and inaction. In late 2005, environmental activists petitioned the country's Court of Appeal in an attempt to force the government to introduce regulations for the compulsory labelling of GM food.

The non-profit Centre for Environmental Justice filed this petition against the Consumer Affairs Authority (CAA) as well as the ministries of trade and health, saying that a country producing or consuming GM products should have a clear and responsive regulatory policy and an authoritative body to ensure that all possible safety measures were taken. It called for monitoring and for public debate and decision-making regarding the issue.

The petition sought a court order obliging the CAA and the Health Ministry to carry out studies on the potential hazards of GM food on human health and the environment, and to determine standards and specifications for GM products.

There are over 60 products on the market containing GM ingredients — all imported. CEJ said Sri Lankan consumers should have a choice of GM or non-GM products, and accused the government of being slow in bringing new laws for compulsory labelling due to pressure from the

US, Australian and New Zealand governments and chambers of commerce.

Sources: http://www.ejustice.lk/gmo-gefoodsriskybusiness. htm
http://www.efl.lk/pp0604.html

4. Mechanical Dredging of Sand Suspended

In March 2005, the Supreme Court ordered governmental authorities to stop mechanised sand mining. Those engaged in this destructive practice were to be arrested and their equipment seized.

The court drew attention to the dangerous implications posed by mechanised sand mining, especially to the ground water of the Negombo area on the west coast. These included the creation of inland, saline wetlands. Ecosystems disturbed in such a manner could inflict major damage in the event of another tsunami, the court observed.

The court ordered that no licences for mechanised sand mining would be issued until the national policy on water was formulated.

Source: http://www.efl.lk/news.html

Thailand

Qwanruedee Chotichanathawewong
Director
Energy, Industry and Environment Programme
Thailand Environment Institute

1. Severe Flood and Drought in Thailand

In the year 2005, Thailand confronted severe problems, which brought water resource management into the spotlight. There was not only severe drought, but also major flooding throughout the country. In August, torrential rainfall from the southwesterly monsoon caused the worst flash floods in the northern region in nearly thirty years, affecting several towns and cities in six northern provinces. There were six deaths and about 50,000 people affected from the inundation. After the northern flood loss had faded, the northeasterly monsoon, which generally brings dry and cold air to major parts of the country, generated heavy rainfall and devastating floods in the south of the country in December. There was serious flooding in eight provinces. The average floodwater levels in these areas were in the range of 50 and 200 centimeters. The December floods destroyed livestock, bridges, roads, houses, agricultural lands and products, as well as spreading diseases.

Prior to the heavy rainfall, the water crisis was also critical in many regions of the country, particularly in the east of Thailand. On the eastern seaboard, several industrial estates are located and water consumption is substantial. In August, natural water flowed into local reservoirs at the rate of 400,000 m^3 per day while 500,000 m^3 was pumped out for the local consumption in the same period. As a consequence, most local industries and residences were affected by a water shortage. The situation in Rayong province was critical, as fresh water for the province's consumption risked running out in 150 days. In response, the region's water-supply company planned to alleviate further risk by developing more reliance on rivers as an additional source of water. Another solution would have been to redirect water from the Strungnam Dam in Cambodia.

Source: The Nation, August 15, 2005

2. Empowering the Young Generation to Protect the Environment

In 2005, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) of Thailand in cooperation with academic institutes nationwide launched a new project entitled "*Environmental Warriors*" to provide hands-on experiences on pollution inspection for students studying in environmental-related fields. In the project, the participating students, so-called "Environmental Warriers", have the major task of inspecting wastewater and air emissions from industrial factories located in their local areas. The activities include GPS mapping, questionnaire surveying, sample collection and laboratory analysis. The inspection is not meant to disclose non-compliance but to address environmental impacts from industrial operations. Based on the

results, MONRE will provide advice for improvements at the initial stage. If environmental problems persist, a warning will be given, and later, the legal process will take its course.

In this regard, the project is expected to strengthen industrial pollution monitoring by engaging the participation of academic institutes, as the survey is expected to assist MONRE in identifying environmental management situation at local levels, which can lead to the improvement of industrial environmental management. Moreover, participating in the project would also strengthen the environmental awareness and capacity of the students through hands-on activities.

Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, November 28, 2005

3. Tsunami Aftermath: On the Road to Recovery

Since the deadly tsunami washed away more than 5000 lives from the Andaman shores in 2004, the government has spent more than Bt7 billion on tsunami recovery, with another Bt1.3 billion coming from private sources. The majority of assistance was directly provided to the 55,000 people affected in the provinces of Phuket, Phang-nga, Krabi, Trang, Satun and Ranong. The disaster caused damage not only to the lives and property of millions of people but also to the environment. Thailand has made strong efforts to rehabilitate the environment in the affected areas on the Andaman coast. It remains committed to bringing confidence back to its coastal communities and visitors, both local and foreign.

From an assessment of the environmental impact conducted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), only 5 to 10 percent of the coral reefs in the Andaman Sea were damaged by the tsunami. In an attempt to protect the coral reefs, a rehabilitation project was launched to install and repair buoys in front of Patong beach in Phuket and has been expanded to other areas, such as Kata and Karon beaches. In addition, Thailand is taking the opportunity to improve coastal and marine resources management in the affected coastal provinces by promoting sustainable tourism industry.

Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, December 27, 2005

4. Success in CFC Phase-Out

The Ministry of Industry announced the achievement of the CFC phasing-out scheme. As one of the parties in the Montreal Protocol, Thailand launched a campaign to eliminate the use of CFCs from 1989. The policy measures include the development of a master plan for CFC phasing-out and economic incentives for the private sector, such as subsidies of $53 million and interest-free loans of $5 million from the Montreal Multilateral Fund for technology improvement and modification to switch to CFC substitutes. Moreover, import control measures have also been adopted, while a capacity building programme was established for the private sector.

To date, a complete CFC phase-out in the industrial sector has already been achieved, while most of the imported CFCs are used in the service sector such as in the maintenance of refrigerators and air-conditioners.

Source: Ministry of Industry, September 17, 2005.

5. Ministry of Energy Responds to the King's Recommendation on Renewable Energy

Traditionally, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand gives a speech to Thais on the occasion of his birthday, December 5th. For his 78th birthday in 2005, the King addressed one of the main issues on the

promotion of energy from renewable sources, particularly bio-diesel, within the country. The rising global energy crisis and environmental concerns have exacerbated the need for renewable energy in Thailand.

In response to the King's advice, the Ministry of Energy is taking the leading role in promoting the commercial use of bio-diesel as well as supporting bio-diesel production. The Ministry's strategy included the plan to use B5 (diesel oil with bio-diesel content of 5 percent) by 2011 and B10 (diesel oil with bio-diesel content of 10 percent) by 2012 countrywide, with an amount of 8.5 billion liters per day approximately. At present, the existing capacity of bio-diesel production in Thailand is 22,600 liters per day, and the projected capacity which includes that from the plants under construction would be increased to 1 million liters.

The capacity of bio-diesel production in the country is limited by the quantity of its raw materials. Accordingly, the Ministry planned to increase palm plantation coverage to 5 million rai (1 rai = 1600 square meters) by 2012 from only 2 million rai at present.

The Ministry has also initiated a demonstration of bio-diesel production to local communities, using palm oil, physic nut oil (Jatropha curcas), or used vegetable oil as raw materials. The locally-produced bio-diesel can be used in agricultural machines, resulting in both economic and environmental benefits in the local areas.

Source: Ministry of Energy, December 28, 05

Vietnam

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1. National Environmental Conference 2005

On 22 April, the National Environmental Conference was opened in Hanoi. The conference drew attention to the issue of water, soil and air pollution. Some seventy industrial zones and over 1,000 hospitals nationwide discharge millions of cubic metres of waste water into the environment. Meanwhile, the over-exploitation of land, floods, erosion and intrusions of salt water are threatening soil in the plain areas, while out-of-date farming methods and the uncontrolled destruction of forests are causing soil degradation in mountainous areas. Out-of-date production technology and the neglect of proper waste treatment procedures are causing serious air pollution in a number of areas.

Speaking at the conference, Prime Minister Phan Van Khai said the harmony between environmental protection and economic development must be ensured. This was a challenge that required greater effort from not only the government, but all agencies, organisations, businesses and communities. The prime minister said that education in environmental protection is necessary for the installation of permanent awareness among authorities at all levels, all sectors, agencies and people. "Priority should be given to prevention measures in the domain," he said, adding that a fight should be launched against those who pursue profit while neglecting environmental protection. Prime Minister Khai also suggested other solutions to improve environmental works, including diversifying investment sources in environmental protection activities, promoting the involvement of socio-political and mass organisations, as well as the involvement of the community in supervising environmental work, boosting scientific research and technological application and expanding international cooperation in the domain.

Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

2. Five Major Goals in Environment Protection Set for 2005-2010

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has put forward five major objectives for the national environment protection strategy from 2005 to 2010.

The ministry said all production establishments built in this period must adhere to green technology guidelines and standard waste treatment facilities, while 40% of urban areas and 70% of industrial and export processing zones will have waste water treatment systems.

Another goal is to provide safe water to 100% of the urban population and 95% of rural residents, as well as see 90% of daily, industrial and services waste collected and 60% of toxic waste and 100% of hospital waste treated.

To that end, the ministry will spend most of the capital from its Environmental Protection

Fund on waste treatment, preventing and dealing with environmental problems, applying environmentally friendly technology, preserving biodiversity and ensuring sustainable development in almost all enterprises nationwide.

Source: Econet

3. Wetlands Preserve Nation's Biodiversity

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has granted aid worth US$7.1 million for a project involving biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of wetland resources. The project, aimed at raising public awareness and setting forth various solutions to conserve and develop wetlands, will be launched during the 2005-2009 period in the Tram Chim National Park in Dong Thap and the Lang Sen Wetland Reserve in Long An.

Covering an area of 7,588 ha, the Tram Chim National Park is regarded as a smaller version of Dong Thap Muoi (Plain of Reeds) located in south-west Vietnam. The park is home to a primitive ecosystem with more than 130 species of indigenous plants, 120 kinds of freshwater fish, nearly forty varieties of amphibians and reptiles and 200 kinds of birds.

The 5,030 ha Lang Sen wetland reserve boasts 165 species of wild plants and 149 species of vertebrate animals, thirteen of which are listed in Vietnam's Red Book.

Source: Vietnam.net

4. National Assembly Approves the Revised Law on Environmental Protection

The National Assembly on 19 November voted to approve the revised Environmental Protection Law, replacing the 1993 law.

The 2005 Environmental Protection Law provides for the protection of the environment, measures and resources for environmental protection, rights and obligations of organisations and individuals for environmental protection and state management of environmental protection.

This law will apply to all organisations, individuals, households, local resident communities, Vietnamese people living in foreign countries and foreign organisations and individuals that operate in Vietnam.

The 2005 Environmental Protection Law will come into effect on 1 July 2006.

Source: National Assembly Office

Deputies at the current National Assembly (NA) session discuss the revised law on environmental protection.

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Epilogue

The *Top News on the Environment in Asia* celebrates its eighth year of publication this year. With reports from twenty-one countries and three organisations, this year's edition represents the largest number of news reports collected since our first publication in 1998. We are also delighted to be able to include the first contribution from Bhutan. In addition to the reports on international efforts regarding environmental issues such as global warming, the destruction of the ozone layer, and bio-safety, we have gathered much local news on unique environmental policies and trends.

In 2005, damage due to large scale natural calamities and pollution was seen throughout the region — specifically, the enormous earthquake in northern Pakistan, heavy rain in southern India and river pollution in northeast China. Among the many Asian countries which suffered untold damage from the Indian Ocean tsunami at the end of 2004, some have seen efforts toward reconstruction and the establishment of disaster management systems. However in others, such as Sri Lanka and India, much still remains to be done since the major industries and infrastructures there were severely damaged. Moreover, as highlighted by the reports from Bangladesh and India, adaptation to climate change due to global warming has become an urgent concern in the Asia-Pacific region. Research is now being conducted into measures suitable for those regions particularly vulnerable to climate change.

2005 was a significant year for international efforts against global warming. The Kyoto Protocol came into effect in February and the first-ever Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP/MOP1) was held in Montreal, Canada in November alongside the eleventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP11). Among other things, the progress of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) systems has been reported in India, China, Indonesia and the Philippines. Efforts to implement the CDM are growing particularly intense and there are high expectations within Asia. Since the CDM facilitates sustainable development and investment, efforts made by governments and businesses toward its implementation in Asia will continue to be highlighted.

As is indicated by the reports, the environmental issues facing the region today are wide-ranging. Therefore, appropriate and timely measures by governments and institutions are essential. Also, further united, international co-operation is considered critical. Moreover, all the reports should be considered important sources of information for better understanding the global environment situation and for formulating measures.

By making the most of IGES' research network, the *Top News on the Environment in Asia* will continue to collect and disseminate information on the wide-ranging trends regarding Asia-Pacific environmental issues as well as related responses and measures, as we consider them to be extremely valuable sources of information.

Previous Articles of Top News on the Environment in Asia

Contents of the 1998 Top News on the Environment in Asia

[China] Ren Yong, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. Enactment of the State Council Ordinance Concerning Environmental Management for Construction Projects
2. Promotion of National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA)
3. The Yangtse River Flood Caused by Abnormal Climate Conditions, but Worsened by Ecological Destruction in the Middle and Upper Reaches

[India] Maithili Iyer, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. Biodiversity Bill to be Discussed in the Winter Session of the Parliament
2. High Court Issues Notice to Manage Fly-ash Disposal
3. Proposed Ban on New Diesel Vehicles in the National Capital Region (NCR)

[Indonesia] Mohamad Soerjani, Institute for Environmental Education and Development (IEED)

1. Efforts to Socialise the New Environmental Management Law in Indonesia
2. Sustainable Development: Principles and Implementations
3. The Indonesian Biodiversity Foundation
4. New Eco-tourism Development, Depok, Indonesia

[Japan] Yohei Harashima, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. Enactment of the Law for the Promotion of Measures to Tackle Global Warming
2. The Emerging Environmental Pollution Caused by Exogenous Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals
3. Preparatory-Phase (Activities) of Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET)
4. Establishment of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

[Korea] Tae Yong Jung, National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES)

1. Posting Toxic Chemicals Control Act and Regulations
2. Reforming of Green-belt (Development Restriction Area)
3. First Ever Ecological Survey Planned on DMZ

[The Philippines] Merlin M. Magallona, University of the Philippines (UP)

1. Environmental Policy in the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998
2. Environmental and Natural Resources Officers for Philippine Cities

[Singapore] Chia Lin Sien, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)

1. New Measures to Combat Maritime Pollution
2. Singapore Ratifies International Maritime Conventions
3. Study on Energy Efficiency
4. The Haze Continues

[Thailand] Tongroj Onchan, Thailand Environment Institute (TEI)

1. Salween Logging Scandal
2. Forest Encroachment and the Right of People to Live in Thailand's Dwindling Forest
3. The Effects of El Nino and the Worst Forest Fires
4. Thai-Burmese Gas Pipeline Project
5. Inland Prawn Farming

Contents of the 1999 Top News on the Environment in Asia

[Cambodia] Kol Vathana, International and Public Cooperation, Ministry of Environment (MoE)

1. Participation in the Second Regional Forum for Southeast Asia of the IUCN World Commission for Protected Areas
2. Workshop on "Awareness of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance"
3. "Management of Forests and Elimination of Illegal Forest Activity" Begins
4. Workshops on Development of Local Forests
5. Drafting of a "Sub-Decree on the 23 Protected Areas Management in Cambodia"

[China] Zhou Xin, Policy Research Center for Environment and Economy of State Environmental Protection Administration (PRCEE)

1. Twentieth Anniversary of the Enactment of "The Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China"
2. Highlighting Pollution Control: Evident Results Achieved
3. Increase of Investment in Environmental Protection
4. Ecological Conservation in the Yangtze and Yellow River Basins

[India] Maithili Iyer, Tata Energy and Resources Institute

1. Supreme Court Tightens Emissions Standards in Delhi
2. Ministerial Directive to Use Fly Ash for Construction Purposes
3. Negotiations for a Biosafety Protocol

[Indonesia] Mohamad Soerjani, National Research Council

1. Provincial Autonomy in Regional Development
2. Profile of the Environmental Minister
3. Sustainable Development and Provincial Autonomy
4. Environmental Impact Analysis New Regulations 1999
5. Timber Plantation

[Japan] Yohei Harashima, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. Crested Ibis Hatching
2. Accident at the Conversion Building in the Nuclear Fuel Processing Plant
3. Law Concerning Special Measures for Dioxin Contamination
4. First Tripartite Environmental Ministers Meeting among China, Japan, and Korea
5. IGES Hosts the 1999 Open Meeting of the Human Dimensions of the Global Environmental Change Research Community

[Korea] Seung Woo Kim, Korea Environment Institute (KEI)

1. Reforming of the Greenbelt Policy
2. The Dong-gang Controversy
3. New Plan to Improve Nakdong River Water Quality
4. New System to Regulate the Use of Disposable Products
5. Nuclear Radiation Leak Accident

[Malaysia] Wan Portia Hamzah and Norhayati Mustapha, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

1. National Coastal Zone Policy
2. The Dugong - A Creature Threatened?
3. Hope for Biodiversity
4. The Sungai Selangor Dam
5. Pesticide Danger in Rivers?
6. Climate Change Scenario
7. Decisive Action on Toxic and Hazardous Waste

[Mongolia] Ayush Namkhai, Development and Environment Center (DEC)

1. Draft Law on the Fauna of Mongolia
2. Natural Disaster Mitigation Country Programme
3. Programme for Protection of the Air
4. Regulation for Issuing Permits to Import, Sell and Use Ozone-Depleting Substances
5. Natural Disaster (Drought)

[Nepal] Bishnu Bhandari, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. Nepal Establishing a Trust Fund for Biodiversity Conservation
2. Vikarm Tempo Banned in Kathmandu
3. Forest Fire in the Himalayan Region
4. Drought in the Himalayas

[The Philippines] Merlin M. Magallona, University of the Philippines (UP)

1. A New Comprehensive Clean Air Law
2. Garbage Crisis ID Metropolitan Manila
3. Policy of Sustainable Forest Management

[Singapore] Chia Lin Sien, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)

1. Policy Statements by Minister of the Environment, Singapore
2. The Deep Tunnel Sewerage System (DTSS)
3. Join the OPRC Conventions and Accepts Annex V of MARPOL 73/78
4. Annual Oil-spill Exercise
5. Suspension of Import of Live Pigs and a New License for Selling Chilled Pork

[Thailand] Tongroj Onchan, Thailand Environment Institute (TEI)

1. Anchovy Causes National Conflict
2. A Conservation Angle From Zemin's State Visit
3. A Controversial Movie "The Beach"
4. Confusion over Public Land Encroachment near Sri Nakharin Dam
5. Protest against the Coal-fired Power Plant Project

[Vietnam] Pham Huu Nghi, Institute of State and Law, National Center for Social and Humanities

1. Launching of Environmental Protection Policy
2. Hoi An and My Son to Become World Heritages
3. Worst Floods in Forty Years

[Southeast Asia] Chia Lin Sien, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)

1. UNEP Commissions Review of Marine Pollution of East Asian Countries
2. Tenth Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment, Bangkok
3. Regional Consultative Workshop on the East Asian Seas (EAS) Programme to Discuss Issues Concerning Liability and Compensation for Oil Spill Damage and Clean-up Claims
4. An Update on the Regional Haze Situation in Southeast Asia
5. Nipah Virus Epidemic in Peninsular Malaysia

Contents of the 2000 Top News on the Environment in Asia

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Masakazu Ichimura, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN/ESCAP)

1. Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED) 2000
2. State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific 2000
3. Regional Action Programme (RAP) for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific 2001-2005
4. Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment
5. Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
S. Tahir Qadri, Asian Development Bank (ADB)

1. Impact of Forest Fires on the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

[Bangladesh] Khandaker Mainuddin, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)

1. Devastating Flood Hit South-West Region of Bangladesh
2. Sound Waste Management; an Immediate Necessity for Dhaka City
3. Suspended Particulate Matters Remain High in the Air of Dhaka City
4. Red List on Endangered Wildlife

[Cambodia] Khieu Muth, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia

1. Floods in Cambodia
2. National Greenhouse Gas Inventory for 1994
3. New Sub-Decree of Air Pollution
4. Coastal and Marine Problems

[China] Zhou Xin, Policy Research Center for Environment and Economy (PRCEE), The State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA)

1. The Second Revision of the Law of Air Pollution Prevention and Control
2. Great Efforts Taken to Realize the Target of "One Control and Double Attainments"
3. Beijing Initiates the "Green Olympic Action Plan"
4. Sandstorms Hit Beijing and Tianjing Municipalities

[India] Prasad Vaidya, The Weidt Group

1. India Joins the GLOBE Program
2. Draft Rules for Recycling/Management of Lead Acid Batteries
3. Supreme Court Clears Sardar Sarovar on the Marmada River
4. State Governments Fund Participatory Water Harvesting Programs

[Indonesia] Mohamad Soerjani, Institute for Environmental Education and Development

1. National Conference on Natural Resource Management
2. Indonesian Sectoral Agenda 21
3. Environmental Toxicology, Pollution Control and Management
4. National Flora and Fauna Loving Day, 2000
5. Caring for the Future

[Japan] Yohei Harashima, Takushoku University

1. The Basic Law for Establishing a Recycling-based Society
2. Regulation of Exhaust Gases from Diesel Vehicles in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area
3. ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development
4. G8 Environment Ministers' Meeting
5. Illegal Transfer of Hazardous Wastes to the Philippines

[Korea] Hoi-Seong Jeong, Korea Environment Institute

1. The Illegal Toxic Discharge of the Eighth US Army
2. The Suspension of the Planned Construction of Yongwol Multi-Purpose Dam
3. The Establishment of the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development (PCSD)
4. Environmental Impacts Investigation on the Saemankeum Reclamation Project

[Lao PDR] Viengsavanh Duangsavanh, Technology and Environment Agency

1. The Environment as Public Responsibility
2. Local Environmental Management
3. Environmental Impact Assessment
4. Public Involvement in Nam Theun 2 Hydro-Power Project
5. Press Release on Climate Change

[Malaysia] Norhayati Mustapha, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)

1. Timely Review of Highland Development
2. Foiled Toxic Waste Shipment
3. Climate Change Update
4. Millennium Tree Planting
5. Beach Clean-up
6. Recycling Launch

[Mongolia] Ayush Namkhai, Development and Environment Center; Dondogiin Enkhbayar, Ministry for Nature and Environment

1. Law on Tourism
2. Law on Banning the Import, Export and Trans-boundary Movement of Hazardous Waste, and Concerning its Export
3. National Action Programme on Climate Change
4. Natural Disaster
5. Establishment of the "ECO ASIA" Institute

[Nepal] Phool Chandra Shrestha, Freelance Consultant Bishnu B. Bhandari, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. Nepal's "Gift to the Earth"
2. Restoration of the Churia Foothills as a Biological Corridor
3. Nepal Rhino Count 2000
4. Grassroots Conservation Initiatives in Rural Nepal
5. Ban on Old Vehicles in Cities in 2001

[The Philippines] Merlin M. Magallona, University of the Philippines

1. Garbage Avalanche Killed More Than 200 People
2. Hazardous Waste Shipment Sent Back to Japan
3. Lawyers Demand Compensation for Victims of Toxic Waste Contamination in Former U.S Military Bases
4. Oil Spill by Singaporean Tanker

[The Russian Far East] Alexander Sheingauz, Economic Research Institute

1. New Administration for the Use of Natural Resources
2. Voluntary Forest Certification Begins
3. New Protected Area Is Established in Amurskaya Oblast
4. International Workshop on Sustainable Forest Management
5. New Method of Oil Waste Utilization

[Singapore] Chia Lin Sien, Institute of South East Asian Studies

1. Sewage Contamination of Water Supply in Public Buildings
2. Review of Long-Range Comprehensive Concept Plan
3. Waste Collection in Singapore
4. Chemical Spill Stops Fishing and Swimming
5. Deep Tunnel Sewerage System (DTSS): First Tender For Changi Wastewater Treatment Plant
6. Virus Outbreak of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD)

[Thailand] Tongroj Onchan, The Mekong Environment Resource Institute (MERI) and Thailand Environment Institute (TEI)

1. Protest against Thai-Malaysian Natural Gas Pipeline
2. The Violent Pak Moon Dam Protest at the Government House
3. The Car Free Day Campaign
4. Costly Dike Causes Water Pollution
5. Mishandling of Radioactive Waste

[Vietnam] Pham Huu Nghi, Deputy Director of State and Law Journal, Institute of State and Law, National Center for Social Science and Humanities

1. Sanctuary for the Ho Guom Turtle
2. Large Flood in Cuu Long River Delta, South Vietnam
3. Effects of the Ho Chi Minh Highway Project on Cuc Phuong National Garden

Contents of the 2001 Top News on the Environment in Asia

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Tim Higham, United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP-ROAP)

1. The Asia-Pacific Regional 'Platform' for WSSD
2. Asia-Pacific Civil Society Perspective on WSSD Heard
3. Strengthening Regional Capacity for Environmental Law and Conventions
4. Japanese Company Helps Empower UNEP Education, Awareness and Training Work
5. Industry Outreach and Networking

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Lester R. Brown, Earth Policy Institute (EPI)

1. Dust Bowl Threatening China's Future

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. ECO ASIA 2001
2. Regional Preparation for the WSSD (Johannesburg Summit)
3. COP 7
4. Illegal Logging in Indonesia
5. New Bill on Managing the Three Largest Rivers in South Korea
6. Korean Environmental Education Act in the Offing
7. Developments on Environmental Management Accounting in Asia

[Australia] Gerard Early, Approvals and Legislation, Environment Australia

1. Environmental Law Reform
2. Extension of the Natural Heritage Trust
3. National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality
4. Sydney Harbour Federation Trust
5. Australia's Virtual Herbarium

[Bangladesh] Khandaker Mainuddin and Dwijen Mallick, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)

1. Buriganga, the Most Polluted River in Bangladesh
2. Arsenic Contamination in Groundwater poses Serious Health Threat
3. Banning of Polythene Bags is high on the Agenda of the Government of Bangladesh
4. Bio-diversity Conservation Programme Launched in the Sundarbans

[Cambodia] Khieu Muth, Ministry of Environment

1. Survey in Lomphat Wildlife Sanctury
2. Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific
3. The 6th Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment (15-16 MAY 2001)
4. Japanese Royal Couple in Cambodia

[China] Zhou Xin, Policy Research Center for Environment and Economy (PRCEE), The State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA)

1. New Restrictions on Automobile Manufacture and Emissions
2. Beijing Strengthening Environmental Protection to Realize "Green Olympic"
3. The Law of Desertification Prevention and Control
4. Air Quality Forecast in 47 Key Environmental Protection Cities

[India] Prasad Vaidya, The Weidt Group, USA; Maithili Iyer, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratories, USA

1. Ban on Plastic Bags Widens
2. State Governments Follow through on Rainwater Harvesting
3. Energy Conservation Act
4. Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Bill

[Indonesia] Mohamad Soerjani, Institute for Environmental Education and Development (IEED), Member of the National Research Council Indonesia

1. "Clean Ciliwung River Campaign," Jakarta
2. Integrated Chemical Management and Safety
3. National Workshop on Environmental Education
4. Novel Approach to Organic Waste Composting
5. Environmental Policy Revitalization

[Japan] Yohei Harashima, Takushoku University

1. Controversy on Ratifying the Kyoto Protocol
2. Reconsidering the Land Reclamation Project at the Isahaya Bay
3. Enforcement of the Law for Recycling of Home Appliances
4. Inauguration of the Ministry of the Environment

[Korea] Jeong-Gue Park, Korea Environment Institute (KEI)

1. Environmental Efforts Driven by the 2002 FIFA World Cup Hosted by Korea and Japan
2. Conservation of the Tumen River
3. Eco-Technopia 21
4. Saemankeum Reclamation Project

[Lao PDR] Soukata Vichit, Science Technology and Environment Agency (STEA)

1. Integration of Environmental Concerns into Socio-Economic Development Plans
2. The First State of Environment Report
3. The First Sectoral EIA Regulation
4. EIA for Gold Mine
5. Program to Improve Environmental and Social Management

[Malaysia] Wan Portia Hamzah and Norhayati Mustapha, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)

1. Focus on Wetlands
2. Natural Heritage of Belum to Remain
3. EIA for All Projects
4. Prestigious Award for Malaysians Committed to Turtle Conservation
5. Transfrontier Protected Areas

[Mongolia] Ayush Namkhai, Development and Environment Center; Dondogiin Enkhbayar, Ministry for Nature and Environment

1. Air Pollution in the Capital
2. Amendments Made to the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment
3. Determination of List, Estimation of Size and Percentage of Payments and Charges
4. Pasture Overgrazing Increases
5. Census of Argali Sheep (Ovis Ammon) Population
6. Drought for Three Years Running

[Nepal] Phool Chandra Shrestha, Freelance Consultant

1. Kumrose Community Forest Earns from Eco-tourism
2. Arsenic Contamination in Groundwater
3. Lake Phewa Plan Adds Woes
4. Leasehold Forestry in 16 More Districts
5. National Policy on Wetland Management

[New Zealand] Jacquelyn Harman; Neil Ericksen, The International Global Change Institute (IGCI), The University of Waikato

1. New Zealand Takes Steps Towards Ratifying the Kyoto Protocol
2. Moratorium on Field Trials of Genetically Modified Organisms Lifted
3. Ten Years Under the Resource Management Act (1991)

[The Philippines] Merlin M. Magallona, University of the Philippines

1. Garbage Crisis and the Semirara Controversy
2. President Estrada Calls Military to Assist in Garbage Disposal
3. Smoking Ban Starts June 2001
4. Congressional Measure for Wildlife Resources Conservation Signed into Law

[The Russian Far East]
Alexander Sheingauz, Economic Research Institute

1. New Russian Target Program on Ecology and Natural Resources
2. New GEF Project on Ecosystem Conservation in Khabarovskiy Krai
3. International Conference on Sustainable Forest Management
4. Exhaustion of Fish Reserves in the Sea of Okhotsk
5. A Surge of Poaching in Ussuri Taiga

[Singapore] Koh Kheng-Lian, Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL), Faculty of Law National University of Singapore

1. Industrial Water ("NEWater")
2. Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, 2001
3. Resources Conservation & Waste Minimization
4. Draft Singapore Green Plan 2012
5. Capacity Building in Environmental Management

[Thailand] Tongroj Onchan, The Mekong Environment and Resource Institute (MERI)

1. Phetchabun Flash-Floods and Mudslides: Death Toll

Climbs to More Than 120 People
2. Ban on Inland Prawn Farming
3. GM Food Will Be Labeled
4. Bangkok Faces Garbage Crisis

[Vietnam] Pham Huu Nghi, Institute of State and Law, National Center for Social Science and Humanities

1. The Project to Improve and Purify the Environment of the Tolich, Lu, and Set Rivers in the Capital City of Hanoi
2. The Oil Overflow Incident On the Sea of Vungtau
3. The National Seminar on Abidance with and Enforcement of Environmental Laws

Contents of the 2002 Top News on the Environment in Asia

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Tim Higham, United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP-ROAP)

1. Asian Brown Cloud Study
2. ASEAN Haze Agreement Signed
3. UNEP Project to Harness the Potential of ICT for Environmental Protection
4. Sweden Supports UNEP Initiative to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
5. Japan Company-Funded UNEP Project Empowers Education

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Lester R. Brown, Earth Policy Institute (EPI)

1. Water Deficits Growing in Many Countries

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. The Second Global Environment Facility (GEF) Assembly
2. APFED's Message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)
3. The Eighth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP8) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
4. New "Bio Carbon Fund" Launched by World Bank
5. Yellow Dust-Storm over the Skies of Northeast Asian Cities
6. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Held
7. The Second China-Korea-Japan Tripartite Roundtable on Environment Industries

[Australia] Gerard Early, Approvals and Legislation, Environment Australia

1. State of the Environment
2. Natural Resource Management
3. Sustainable Schools
4. Australia and Japan Unite to Protect Migratory Birds
5. World's Biggest Marine Reserve

[Bangladesh] Khandaker Mainuddin, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)

1. Workshop on Capacity Building for Preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA)
2. Total Ban on Two-Stroke Autorickshaws in Dhaka City
3. Noise Pollution Caused Environmental and Health Problems in Dhaka City
4. Citizens and Environmental Groups Demand Protection of Rivers and Water Bodies

[Cambodia] Khieu Muth, Ministry of Environment

1. 1st Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS) Program Summit
2. The 8th ASEAN summit
3. Training Workshop on Climate Change Issues

[China] Zhou Xin, Policy Research Center for Environment and Economy (PRCEE), The State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA)

1. The Fifth National Conference on Environmental Protection
2. The Law of Environmental Impact Assessment
3. Anti-Desertification Combating in China
4. The Second Assembly of Global Environment Facility in Beijing

[India] Kirit S. Parikh, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Integrated Research and Action for Development

1. Civil Society Groups Get Action on Air Pollution in Delhi
2. Supreme Court Protects Tribals' Right
3. India Ratifies the Kyoto Protocol and Hosts COP8
4. Parliament Passes Bio-Diversity Act
5. International Recognition for Indian Environmentalists

[India] R Uma, Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI)

1. India Moves to Eliminate the POPs
2. Regional Workshop on Household Energy Indoor Air Pollution and Health
3. Asian Brown Cloud
4. Auto Fuel Policy
5. The Eighth Session of the Conference of Parties (COP8) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

[Indonesia] Mohamad Soerjani, Institute for Environmental Education and Development (IEED), Indonesian National Research Council

1. Indonesia at the World Summit on Sustainable Development
2. Sustainable Development Plan of Action on Women and Children
3. The Earth Charter
4. Cooperation with Environmental Counseling Association in Nagasaki (ECAN)
5. The International Center for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF): Teaching Materials

[Japan] Yohei Harashima, Takushoku University

1. Conclusion of the Kyoto Protocol and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)
2. Trouble at Nuclear Plants
3. New National Strategy on Biological Diversity
4. Food Safety Scandals

[Korea] Jeong-Gue Park, Korea Environment Institute (KEI)

1. Cheonggyecheon Restoration Project
2. Comprehensive Measures for Water Supply Special Act of the Four Major Rivers and Establish the Water Pollution Prevention Plan
3. Seoul Metropolitan Air Quality Improvement

[Lao PDR] Somsanouk Phonnakhoth, Science Technology and Environment Agency (STEA)

1. Keys Environmental Issues in Lao PDR
2. 1st ASEAN+3 Environment Ministers Meeting
3. Lao Environmental Fund
4. Environmental Education and Awareness Programme
5. Climate Change Actions Further Developed

[Malaysia] Norhayati Mustapha and Wan Portia Hamzah, Bureau of Environment, Science and Technology (BEST), Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)

1. Tora! Tora!
2. People Power Succeeds in Re-locating Incinerator
3. Genetic Engineering

4. Participation of Local Communities in Wetland Conservation

[Mongolia] Ayush Namkhai, Development and Environment Center; Dondogiin Enkhbayar, Ministry for Nature and Environment

1. Renewed Law on Land
2. Dangerous Forest Fires and Forest Pests
3. Regional Project on Yellow Dust-Storm
4. Polar Researchers Jubilee

[Nepal] Phool Chandra Shrestha, Freelance Consultant

1. Melting Ice on Everest
2. Land Degradation Combat Plan Underway
3. Tons of Expired Pesticides Stored
4. Plan to Make Daman Second Botanical Garden
5. Medical Waste Contributes to Pollution

[New Zealand] Jacquelyn Harman; Neil Ericksen, The International Global Change Institute (IGCI), The University of Waikato Sustainable Development in New Zealand

1. A Sustainable Development Strategy for New Zealand
2. Monitoring Sustainable Development in New Zealand
3. An Evaluation of Progress on Ecological Sustainable Development

[The Philippines] Merlin M. Magallona, University of the Philippines

1. World Bank Report on Air Pollution
2. Malampaya Project Won Award in World Summit on Sustainable Development
3. Philippines Ranks Low in Environmental Survey
4. Legislative Attempt Failed to Suspend Implementation of Clean Air Act
5. Destruction of Coral Reef Continues Unabated

[The Russian Far East]
Anatoly Lebedev, Bureau of Regional Outreach Campaigns (BROC)

1. Russian Taiga Has Lost Much of Its Wilderness
2. Certification in Forestry Does Not Mean Environmental Sustainability
3. Russia is Sinking under Nuclear Waste and Spent Fuel
4. Payment for Waste Disposal into Environment Shifted to the Budget
5. Forest Strategy as a Way to Hide Illegal Timber

[Singapore] Koh Kheng-Lian, Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL), Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore

1. National Environment Agency (NEA)
2. The Singapore Green Plan 2012: Beyond Clean and Green Towards Environmental Sustainability
3. Environment Recycling
4. Capacity Building

[Thailand] Tongroj Onchan, The Mekong Environment and Resource Institute (MERI)

1. The Establishment of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
2. The Smoking Ban
3. Labeling of Genetically Modified Foods
4. Flooding in the North and the Northeast

[Vietnam] Pham Huu Nghi, Institute of State and Law, National Center for Social Science and Humanities

1. Establishment of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
2. Establishment of Vietnam Environment Protection Fund
3. U Minh Thuong Forest is Burnt
4. Limits on the Number of Motorbikes to Re-establish the Traffic Order and Reduce Environment Pollution in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City

Contents of the 2003 Top News on the Environment in Asia

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Tim Higham, United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP/ROAP)

1. Afghanistan Conflict Environmental Damage Chronicled
2. Northeast Asia Dust and Sand Storms Project Initiated
3. South Asia State of the Environment Reports Target Policy Makers and Youth
4. ASEAN Fire Haze Agreement Takes Effect
5. Chinese Minister Xie Wins UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Lester R. Brown, Earth Policy Institute (EPI)

China Losing War with Advancing Deserts

[The Asia-Pacific Region]
Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

1. The Kyoto Protocol
2. South Asian Regional Conference on Transition towards Sustainable Development
3. Second Meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network
4. The Second and Third Meetings of the Promotion of Asia Forest Partnership (AFP)
5. Enactment of the "Environmental Education Promotion Law"
6. UNEP FI 2003 Global Roundtable in Tokyo
7. The Third World Water Forum (WWF3)
8. The International Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Transport

[Australia] Gerard Early, Australian Government Department of the Environment

1. More Protection for the Great Barrier Reef
2. New Heritage Legislation
3. First Marine Plan under Australia's Oceans Policy
4. Sustainable Cities Initiative

[Bangladesh] Khandaker Mainuddin, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)

1. UNDP will Support Cleaner and Environment Friendly Ship-Breaking
2. Conference on Sanitation Held in Dhaka
3. Laws to Regulate the Operation of Brick-kilns
4. Relocation of Tannery Cluster from Dhaka City to New Industrial Estate
5. Integrated Action Plan to Save the River Buriganga

[Cambodia] Khieu Muth, Ministry of Environment

1. ASEAN Environment Year 2003 (AEY)
2. The 1st Ecotone Seminar Phase II and The 3rd Meeting of Southeast Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (SeaBRnet)
3. Cambodia Protected Area Law

[China] Zhou Xin, Policy Research Center for Environment and Economy (PRCEE), The State Environmental Protection Administration of China (SEPA)

1. China Won 2003 Outstanding National Units Ozone Award
2. Information Disclosure of Corporate Environmental Performance
3. China Council for International Cooperation on

Environment and Development

[India] Kirit S. Parikh, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Integrated Research and Action for Development

1. Civil Society Vigilance Helps Arrest Threats to Taj Mahal
2. Pesticides Residue in Bottled Water and Soft Drinks
3. ISO 14000 Rating for Industrial Townships
4. Capacity Building in Environmental Economics
5. Volvo Environment Prize 2003 for Ecologist and Environmental Activist Dr. Madhav Gadgil

[Indonesia] Mohamad Soerjani, Institute for Environmental Education and Development (IEED), Member of the National Research Council, Indonesia

1. Community Empowerment of Farmers and Fishermen
2. Agroforestry
3. The Eight National Science Congress 2003
4. Jakarta Declaration on Clean Development Mechanism
5. Challenges and Opportunities to Develop Sustainable Development

[Japan] Yohei Harashima, Faculty of International Development, Takushoku University

1. Controversy on Tax against Global Warming
2. New Regulation on Exhaust Gases from Diesel-Powered Vehicles
3. Troubles at Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) Power Plants
4. The 3rd World Water Forum
5. Enactment of the Law for Promotion of Environmental Education

[Korea] Sang-il Hwang, Korea Environment Institute (KEI)

1. Conservation and Convenience Conflict at Mt. Bukhan
2. Schools Boycotted to Protest Nuclear Dump Site
3. A Typhoon Hits Regions of South Korea
4. Five Oil Companies Agree on Protecting Soil Near Gas Stations and Depots

[Lao PDR] Ketkeo Salichanh, Department of Environment, Science Technology and Environment Agency, Prime Minister's Office

1. The Inaugural Meeting of the National Environment Committee (NEC)
2. Provincial Environmental Action Plan and Strategy
3. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
4. National Strategy on Environment Education and Awareness

[Malaysia] Norhayati Mustapha, the Bureau of Environment Science and Technology (BEST), Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)

1. Good News for the Seas
2. Tough Actions Follow Highlands Damage
3. Ramsar Recognizes Johor Wetlands
4. Breakthrough in Water Resource Management

[Mongolia] Ayush Namkhai, Department of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Nature and the Environment

1. Household and Industrial Waste Law Enacted
2. Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development
3. The Basin of Uvs Lake Placed on the World Natural Heritage List
4. 2004 Declared as Year of Water
5. No Land Reclamation Carried Out
6. Distribution and Reserves of Mongolian Khulan Horse

[Nepal] Phool Chandra Shrestha, Freelance Consultant

1. Four Ramsar Sites
2. Fertiliser from Capital's Waste from Next Year
3. Environment Issues Well Considered in Kali Gandaki 'A' Project
4. Biogas Plants Effective Carbon Dioxide Controllers
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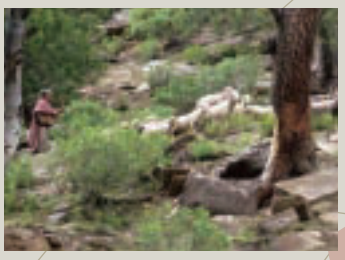

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